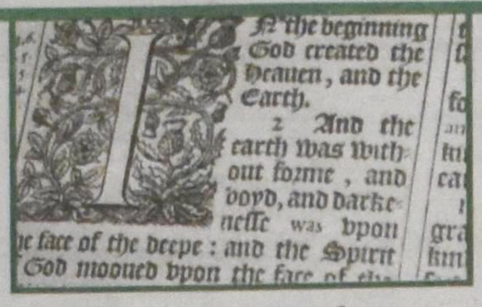
Piper on 'Purpose'
PAGE 7


In the beginning God created the heauen, and the earth.
2 And the earth was without forme, and voyd, and darkenesse was vpon the face of the deepe: and the Spirit of God moued vpon the face of

God's secretaries
PAGE 10

Seeing is hearing
PAGE 13

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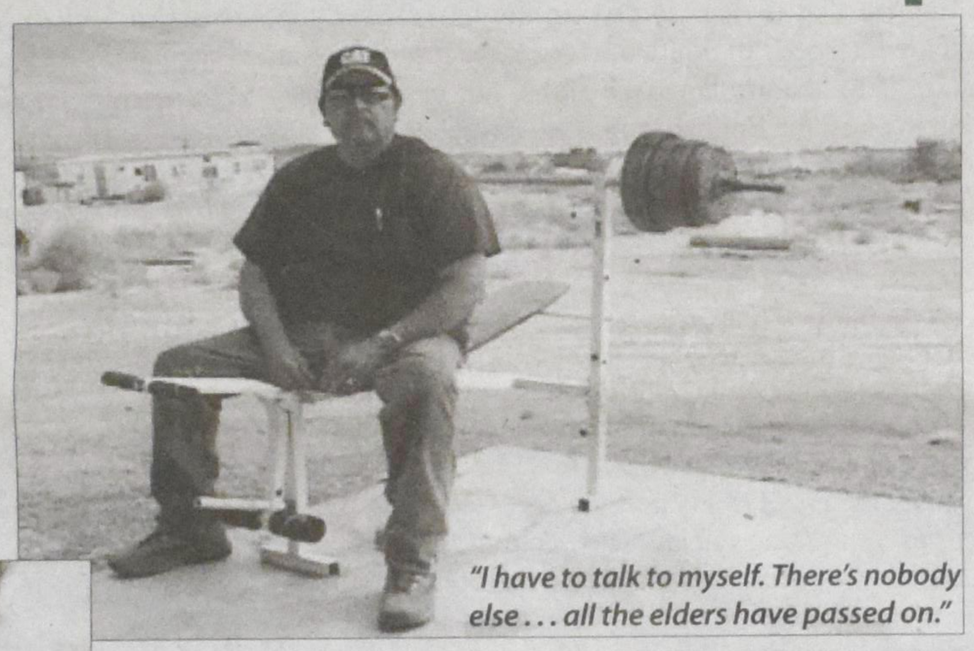
CHRISTIAN COURIER

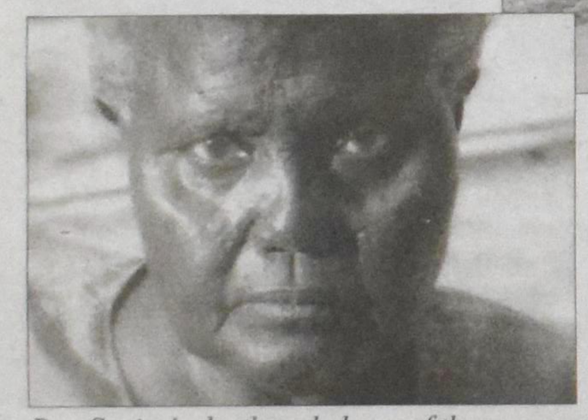
Listening to the world's last speakers

Emily Wierenga

NEERLANDIA, A.B. – Every two weeks another language dies, according to the Living Tongues Institute for Endangered Languages. By 2100, this will have translated into the loss of 3,500 native tongues since 1966.

More than losing half of the world's 7,000 dialects, however, this statistic predicts a loss of everything that accompanies speech. That is, it predicts a loss of half the world's soul.


"I have to talk to myself. There's nobody else . . . all the elders have passed on."


Boa Senior's death ended one of the world's earliest languages.

currently on the verge of extinction, India is what linguist K. David Harrison has coined the world's primary "language hotspot."

"The fate of languages is interlinked with that of species as they undergo parallel extinctions," Harrison said in an interview with BBC. "Scientific knowledge is comparable for both domains, with an estimated 80 percent of plant and animal species unknown to science, and 80 percent of languages yet to be documented."

Having collaborated with Greg Anderson, director of the Living Tongues Institute, Harrison has identified 24 hotspots to date for

My identity is completely bound up in my language.

endangered languages. "A language hotspot is a contiguous region which has, first of all, a very high level of language diversity," Harrison told *The Economist*, November of 2010. "Secondly, it has high levels of language endangerment. Thirdly, it has relatively low levels of scientific documentation."

More than a language

Having spoken with hundreds of "last speakers" in his travels, Harrison – whose work was recently featured in the film, *The Linguist* – believes that when we lose a language, "we lose centuries of human thinking about time, seasons, sea creatures, reindeer,

edible flowers, mathematics, landscapes, myths, music, the unknown and the everyday," as stated in his book, *When Languages Die* (2007). Claire Soares, reporter for *The Belfast Telegraph*, calls these "cultural insights." She cites the well-known example of the Inuit's many terms for snow, or Africans' words for rice, but "did you know that the 200 or so people

See **Last speakers** *on page 2*

Finding that which binds us: E-books vs real books

Heidi Kerssies

MILTON, Ont. – I took my grade three students to the school library for our weekly browsing time. They were there to look for books. One student appeared by my side. "I can't find any books," he bemoaned. What? No books in a library? Is that even possible? Well, apparently it is.

In 2010 the University of Texas in San Antonio built the first bookless library. Instead, the library makes e-books and online journals available to its students. The shelves have been removed and the library is now described as being full of students studying. "It's the heart of the university," says Krisellen Maloney, the library dean.

Opinions are as boundless as e-books on this subject. Some readers love to hold a book in their hand, to feel and smell it, particularly the musty-smelling ones. They argue that you cannot mark up an e-book; you cannot write in the margins; you cannot dog-ear a favourite section. You cannot lend an e-book to a friend with a little note hidden in its pages. E-books, critics point out, cannot be easily read in every location, especially not near water. And many

Many libraries see their services as more important than physical books.

books are not completely available as e-books.

People in favour of e-books, on the other hand, claim that it is much lighter to carry around 100 books stored in your Kindle rather than 100 books in your backpack. With

See **Books** *on page 2*

News

Last speakers *continued*

who speak Toratan on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi have a word for waking up and finding something's changed?"

Language, adds the National Geographic's Enduring Voices webpage, defines a culture. "Many endangered languages have rich oral cultures with stories, songs, and histories passed on to younger generations, but no written forms. With the extinction of a language, an entire culture is lost."

Harrison recalls Johnny Hill, Jr. of the Chemehuevi tribe of Arizona. Also featured in *The Linguists*, Hill is the last speaker of Chemeheuvi. Raised by a grandmother who only spoke their native tongue, Hill learned English in a desperate attempt to connect with the outside world. Later, however, his children weren't interested in doing the work of learning Chemeheuvi. As a result, today, "I have to talk to myself," says Hill. "There's nobody else . . . all the elders have passed on."

With culture and heritage comes identity, something attested to by Senegalese PhD student Serge Sagna of the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. "My identity is completely bound up in my language," he says. "It reflects a unique view of the world, and a whole history without which we cannot move forward."

But more than this, he adds, knowledge of the world is wrapped up in dialect and story. "Most of what we know about endangered species is encoded in languages that have never been written down. So in saving languages, we may be able to save species and eco-systems."

Is English to blame?

Due largely to widespread poverty among small communities and tribes, the main dialect and tribal tongue killers have been globalization and migration. "Economic pressures force people to move from their village to the cities," reports Soares. As a result, "local languages are coming under threat from the *lingua franca* of the workplace."

As of 2007, English, Russian and Mandarin were spoken by about 80 percent of the global population, while 3,500 languages were being represented by 0.2 percent of the population.

It is a lie of globalization, believes Harrison, that one must abandon one's native tongue in order to learn a new one. "No one, no matter how poor, becomes richer by abandoning . . . one language to learn another, and in fact, I suggest they become poorer from it."

Nevertheless, it's becoming harder to inspire a respect for heritage when, as the National Science Foundation puts it, "People find it easier to conduct business and communicate with those outside their own culture if they speak more widely used languages."

And it's English that is seen as driving the knowledge economy and the Internet. "In South-east Asia, the response to globalization is to acquire language skills, not in many languages, but in one – the English language – which is seen as the key to success in the globalized age," says Dr. Rujaya Abhakorn, lecturer in South-east Asian History at Chiang Mai University, Thailand.

Grace in the silence

As Christians, we have an opportunity to stand up for those people who are losing or have lost that part of their identity called language. To date, some 40 languages in California and Oklahoma, where thousands of native Americans were made to relocate during the notorious 19th century Trail of Tears, have fewer than 10 native speakers left. In the early 20th century, over 150,000 Canadian children were made to abandon their native tongue in residential schools. But efforts are being made to remedy these wrongs – to give a voice to the voiceless.

Fred Nahwooksy of the National Museum of the American Indian is one individual trying to return some lost languages to everyday use. The Enduring Voices Project funds language documentation and preservation. Wycliffe Translators is making the Bible available in over 2,000 languages, with 2,100 unreached tongues remaining. Documentaries such as *The Linguists* detail the lives of the world's last speakers. By learning about initiatives like these, and by praying on behalf of those so lonely they speak to themselves, we can begin to stand up for the rights of the poor and implement justice for the oppressed (Isa. 10:1-4). We can begin to do our part in helping to save the soul of the world.

*Emily Wierenga (**emilywierenga.com**) is an author, artist and freelance writer whol ives with her husband and son in Neerlandia, AB. For more info on this article, visit **livingtongues.org**.*

Books *continued*

Children harvest parts from a Ghanaian techno-dump.

so many titles instantly available, you can hear about a great new book at the coffee shop on your way to work and then download and read the first chapter during your lunch hour. E-books are making stories and essays and poems almost effortlessly available to people – at their fingertips, you might say. Some say that e-books will make reading a more social act by getting more people to read and talk about books.

Digital bridges the divide

As e-books become more popular in North America, reflect on how it might impact places elsewhere, places where climate control has not yet been perfected, places where weather and insects can destroy books. In these environments, musty smelling books are not so appealing. In remote or poor areas there are no libraries and books can be expensive to buy and hard to find. In that case, e-books might be a bridge between developing and developed worlds in the same way that cell phones have been. E-books can bring stories and information into the lives of people who would otherwise not have access to them. Consider the possibilities of the global conversations that could take place because of these shared stories.

E-book supporters also emphasize that it's the greener option. Paper books obviously use up resources from trees. Some call them DTV – Dead Tree Versions. The ubiquitous presence of the used book store on every Canadian main street shows that we might have issues with our books once they no longer interest us. Paper books can sometimes be a dime a dozen – literally.

On the other hand, most e-readers are made in production facilities in the Special Economic Zone of China – in factories where workers are not treated fairly and have no leisure time for books, whether paper or electronic. In some factories, millions of square meters of safety nets are necessary to stop the workers from committing suicide. The electronic gadgets, meanwhile, travel to the West to be marketed and consumed, but that's not the end of their journey. When users are done with their e-reader, or wish to upgrade it, the e-waste usually ends up in a place like the suburban dump near Accra, Ghana. Here people harvest the metals from waste thought to be too hazardous for the industrialized world to handle.

Bound by the same maker

In the end, perhaps the medium is less important than the shared story. The Bible speaks about many ways of writing. God commands Moses to write on stone tablets. The Israelites are instructed to write on their doorframes. We are to write on the tablets of our hearts and minds. Ezekiel was told to write on a stick of wood. God wrote with his finger on the wall of King Belshazzar's palace. Jesus knelt down and wrote in the sand.

It is the story that is important; it is the story that might inspire us to change. That is why I spent so much time with my student who claimed that he could not find any books in the library. In the end we didn't find the right book in the library, so I lent him one from my personal library. One day soon I may be helping him find a text on his e-reader, a text that will tell the story of a Chinese worker making electronic gadgets or a young boy in the dump taking apart discarded cell phones. I want him to read those stories and make connections between his life and the lives of others. I want him to write these stories on his heart and mind. I want him to remember that in the palm of God's hand, the creator has written his name alongside the name of the man who assembled his e-reader. I want him to be bound up in the story that binds us all, the story that God has written in the heart of all people, the story of hope and grace for everyone.

Heidi Kerssies attends Georgetown Christian Reformed Church and teaches students in grades two and three at Halton Hills Christian School.

Better bookless?

At the University of Alberta, "virtually 90 percent of journals are now electronic, without print equivalent," according to its head librarian and president of the Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL). Most CARL members are following the same trend. As a result, librarians must be more technologically proficient than ever.

Critics of these virtual libraries point out that digital material can be censored, restricted, difficult to access or prohibitively expensive for smaller schools. "Bit rot" – digital deterioration within 10 or 15 years – is also a concern.

(With material from *Macleans*, Oct. 7, 2010).

Column

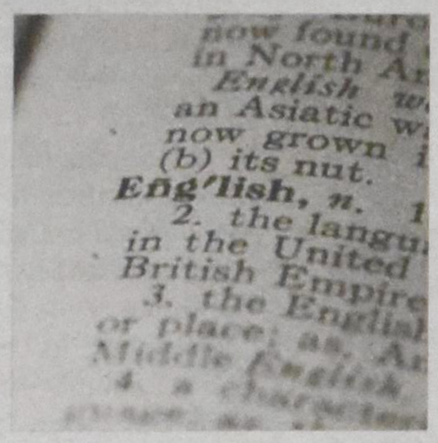
Christ @ Culture

Lloyd Rang

Correct living

I carry a sharpie with me to the gym. I use it to correct the many spelling and grammatical errors I see on their posters and notices. Sometimes, it's just a comma or an apostrophe out of place. Other times it's a minor misspelling. Once, a sentence read: "be sure to work out everyday."

That one sent me over the edge. Ever since, I've carried a sharpie and quietly corrected the mistakes. This won't surprise anyone who knows me. Especially not my former students.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Middle English

Once upon a time I was a ruthless, old-school English teacher. I made sure students wrote in complete sentences. I warned them against using slang in formal writing. I bled red ink all over their papers. And I enjoyed it. And even though it's been years since I was a teacher, I still attack errors with my sharpie.

Which, frankly, makes me a jerk. It also means I have missed the point about language.

When we speak to each other, it's almost never in fully formed, grammatically correct sentences. That would sound weird. In everyday speech, we use sentence fragments and slang. And so, to write the way that real people actually speak – to really communicate with people – you've got to break the rules a little.

Online, of course, there are almost no rules. A phrase like "*UR GR8 @ txting. LMIRL*" (You're great at texting. Let's meet in real life!) is clear as day to kids and adults who use the SMS feature on their cell phones. It's also the kind of thing that gives English teachers – and recovering English teachers – a sharp, searing pain behind their right eyeball.

But – as I have learned from experience – we teachers are like Pharisees: we can quote every detail of the law correctly, but miss the overall intent and message of the law.

Too often, we care a great deal about people writing *correctly,* and not enough about whether people are communicating *effectively.*

Let's go back to the texting example. Obviously, "UR GR8 @ txting" breaks every rule of standard English. But as a solution to a problem (you pay by the character when you send a cell phone text, so every letter counts), it's absolutely elegant. It gets the point across quickly, clearly and affordably. That's what language is supposed to do.

Unfettered letters

There's something fresh and creative about texting. New words and phrases are being invented almost daily because technology is allowing a smart, literate population to express itself creatively. That's exciting – or should be, to anyone who really loves language, and not just the rules about language.

Sure, some language – like the law, for example – needs to be rule-bound and precise. But most often, language should be joyous and free and fun. Where is the harm in trying to be understood in new and creative ways?

Which takes me back to my shameful admission about the sharpie. Is it really an offense to confuse the adverb phrase "every day" with the adjective "everyday?" The meaning is usually clear, after all. It's not correct usage, but it's not "wrong."

What's wrong is pointing out the mistake in such a passive-aggressive way. What's wrong is anonymously embarrassing the sign-writing gym employee week after week. It's a bulletin board in a gym, after all. Civilization won't collapse if a comma is misplaced.

I think a lot of the sins we commit are like that. There are times when we self-righteously set someone straight: the dad in the supermarket with the bratty kids, the high-school student obliviously wearing an iPod, the newly separated mom in the pew behind us. We take out the sharpie. We circle the error. And we miss the point.

Social customs, like language, are changing fast. In my father's time, dads didn't get to shop for groceries with their kids. When I was in high school, it was hard to find a place to get lost in my own music. Not long ago, a mom in an abusive marriage didn't have the power to end it.

Just like not every new word is a threat to the English language, not every social change is a threat to the fabric of society. In fact, it might just be the opposite.

Like language, our society is changing – and changing quickly. Changing customs offend and scare people who are used to living by a certain set of rules. And we can feel compelled to speak out when we see those rules broken.

Sometimes, it's the person holding the pen who most needs correction.

Lloyd Rang (Lloydrang@rogers.com) lives in Bowmanville, Ont.

Don't be a pettifogger: *A quiz of funny words*

Are there certain words that make you laugh? Match the following comical-sounding words with the correct definition. For example, a snickersnee (#1) is a long knife (g).

1.	Snickersnee	a. The fear of running out of reading material
2.	Pettifogger	b. An umbrella
3.	Bumbershoot	c. A melee, a riot
4.	Abibliophobia	d. Nonsense
5.	Quean	e. A rapscallion, hooligan
6.	Sialoquent	f. To spit while speaking
7.	Widdershins	g. ~~A long knife~~
8.	Folderol	h. In a contrary or counter-clockwise direction
9.	Jackanapes	i. A disreputable woman
10.	Donnybrook	j. A person who tries to befuddle others with his speech

Excerpted from *The 100 Funniest Words in English* by Robert Beard.
See page 19 for the definitions.

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Editorials

Language as communion

James Calvin Schaap

When it comes to the English language, international students are not all created equal. Some come with significant prowess and use it fluently; others are not so blessed. Those less skilled create essays that make English teachers, like me, laugh and cry simultaneously – laugh at silly constructions and cry because we know that all the red ink in the world is not going to bless them with the skills of a native.

Sadly, they enroll in literature classes where nuance is everything, where meaning is implied and allusive, and connotation is almost always richer than denotation, even though, when it comes to meaning, both what's suggested and what's actual come into complex play.

A friend of mine whose mother immigrated to Canada after the Second World War shared her one regret in leaving the old country: the virtual loss of humour. Sadly, she'd never learned English well enough to catch nuance – and humor is almost always embedded in language, as in "I met a girl in a revolving door and I've been going around with her ever since."

Last semester an assiduous Korean student sat up front in my class, as determined to learn as she was bamboozled, day by day, by language her classmates handled so simply. It was perfectly obvious that, too often, she just didn't catch on. Understandable.

Which reminds me of a palm-sized piece of paper that stands proudly down here in my basement, a gift from a Resistance fighter during the German occupation of the Netherlands. "*Streng verboden te lachen*," it says. The Nazis never quite understood why the Dutch wouldn't simply join them, Aryans all, so they put up posters begging them to become part of the celebrated Nazi enterprise. The Resistance thought those posters hilarious, so they surreptitiously slapped little handbills on the face of those posters announcing, in Dutch, "It is strongly forbidden to laugh."

The Germans, lacking irony, lacking language skills, lacking nuance, never caught the joke.

Now this Korean student of mine was diligent in ways only a few of my native speakers could match. So I came up with a plan. I found a poem by Chungmi Kim, a Korean-American poet, titled "Being in Love," and I gave it to her, asked if she'd be at all interested in sharing it with the class, talking about it. It's dangerous to make generalizations, but Asian poetry tends to emphasize images rather than word play, and I thought maybe she could talk about this poem herself in a way that her classmates couldn't. It was a long shot, but I wanted to involve her, and too much of what went on in that lit class simply flew over her head.

This poem, I thought, might be easier, with its sweet images. It begins this way:

"Awakened from a dream, I curl up / and turn. The roses on the dresser / smile and your words bloom."

(Sweet love poetry, too, I thought. Maybe she'll do it.)

"I vaguely hear / the sound of your spoon scooping cereal / the water stream in the shower / the buzzing noise of your electric razor / like a singing of cicada."

(One image after another, so typical of Asian poetry. And then the finale . . .)

"Upon waking / on the kitchen counter I find a half / grapefruit carefully cut and sectioned. / Such a loving touch is a milestone / For my newly found happiness."

(Love as a dutifully sectioned grapefruit. This is a slam dunk, I thought.)

A couple of class periods passed before I asked her in private about talking to the class on "Being in Love." "What do you think?" I said. "Maybe you could talk about the poem to the whole class? I could help you. . . ."

She turned her eyes away. The very thought of standing up front was daunting.

"*We* could talk about it – I mean, the two of us. You know," I said, "– I could help you prepare."

She shook her head, smilingly. No go.

"The gift of words is for communion," Eugene Peterson once said. "You can look at me, measure me, weigh me, test me, but until I start to talk you do not know what is going on inside, who I really am." Language is a profound and almost magical gift of God, a gift of mystery and deep human importance. It begets communion, community. It is among this world's greatest riches.

My attempt at inclusion didn't work as I had hoped so the lesson plans went forward without her interpretation of "Being in Love." Well, it had been a long shot.

"But did you like the poem?" I asked her that morning, before starting class.

"Oh, very much," she told me with a broader smile, her eyes now steadily on mine. "I sent it to my boyfriend."

And with that, I knew she understood, and I was thankful, once again, for the communion of language.

James C. Schaap has been teaching literature and writing at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa, for more than 30 years. During that time, he's written many books and articles, including CRC Family Album: the Unfinished Story of the CRC. *His latest book is a collection of meditations titled* Sixty at Sixty: A Boomer Looks at the Psalms *(Faith Alive, 2008).*

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A framework of words

Angela Reitsma Bick

Ten years ago, my husband and I moved to Moscow to learn Russian and teach English. This language exchange was like a pane of glass: half of the time, we looked through with amazement down the long corridor of Russia's cultural history; the rest of the time it was a mirror, showing us a Christian Canadian reflection. Consequently, living in another country taught us as much about our own culture as it did about the unknown one, and – for me – language was the tool of discovery.

In Russian, for example, the word for "red" is almost identical to the word for "beautiful," hinting at a cultural preference for that colour. In a snowy white landscape, after all, red is startling, eye-catching, appealing. Thus in the seventeenth century Moscow's town square, its centre of commerce and celebration and ceremony – its beating heart – was called Red Square as the city's most beautiful spot.

Ferdinand de Saussure, a Swiss linguist in the late nineteenth century, believed that language is a social institution. Words are the structure we use to understand experience, and society – not the individual – creates that structure. It's a fascinating theory. A six-year-old Russian boy, then, is "born into a language that has already done some of his thinking for him" if he equates red with beauty from birth, according to de Saussure. My six-year-old Canadian daughter might similarly believe that anything described as "green" is inherently "good," thanks to the success of eco-marketing.

God said, and it was so

Such associations are not necessarily neutral. Words structure our lives, for good or for ill, almost invisibly. We know this is true because God the architect built this world with words (and saw that it was good), and then gave us his life-sustaining Word and a lifetime of choices. During which, the words we choose to live by matter. That's one reason why a dying language deserves resuscitation (see Wierenga, p. 1-2), and why Christians take Bible translations so seriously (p. 9 and 10); it's why we weigh our words carefully (Martin on p. 12) and deliberate over organizational name changes (see Vlaar p. 24). These are ways of paying attention to the structure we take for granted, and to make sure that the thinking "done for us" is in line with the truth.

In the early 1900s, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union appropriated "red," knowing that a six-year-old Russian boy then would have made certain connections. Red became the Party's official colour, prominently displayed on their famous flag and capitalizing on what Russians had always found beautiful. Red Square, which still holds the bones of the Party's founder, became *their* beating heart, their headquarters. In this way, one word can influence millions. Never underestimate the power of language. Pastors, teachers, writers, parents – all must handle words with care. And no less every Christian, as we wrestle with and pass on the phrases that change lives: "In the beginning"; "In those days"; "The earth is the Lord's"; "I shall not want"; "Have mercy"; "Follow me"; "Do not be afraid"; "He is going ahead"; "Let him who hears say 'Come.'"

Amen.

Angela Reitsma Bick is Editor of CC *and lives in Barrie, Ont. with her husband and two daughters.*

Letters

Without sin, why the sacrifice?

Prof. Eikelboom asserts that "Humans are now seen as part of the natural order, evolving – as all living creatures have – from common ancestors" (*Christian Courier,* April 25). I do not disagree, since all available evidence makes this proposition a certainty. I also agree that, in light of the available scientific evidence, "Some articles of faith once held as central, such as a historical Fall, may also need to be reframed." In light of overwhelming scientific evidence, we can conclude that humanity never previously existed in a state of godly perfection but evolved into complexity from humble, non-conscience origins over billions of years. And if this is true, then humanity did not have the chance to "fall" from this perfection into sin.

Prof. Eikelboom appears, however, to contradict himself by stating that "Christ's unique time on earth . . . must be accepted on faith." If the historical Fall is to be reframed, including diminishing the importance of Adam and Eve – whose existence is impossible in light of evolutionary and genetic evidence – then what role does a human sacrifice and the reanimation of a dead body, an utterly unscientific proposition, play in theology? If the biblical Fall did not occur, as he implies, then sin did not enter the world. Christ's sacrifice would then be unnecessary, since there is nothing to atone for. The two doctrines are inseparable and if one is shown as false, the other must necessarily crumble.

Prof. Eikelboom instructs us to accept only certain doctrines on faith while rejecting others. He implies that because ". . . the facts of Jesus' life cannot be scientifically proven or, for that matter, disproven," it is reason enough to accept the narratives as truth. Science, however, is not the only rational basis for obtaining knowledge. Psychology and logic and literary analysis, among others (including science) are tools we have at our disposal allowing us to reach certain conclusions concerning biblical dogma. And these tools, casting Adam and Eve's existence into dubious light, also raise troubling questions around the "facts" of Jesus' life.

I appreciated Prof. Eikelboom's article and his willingness to challenge out-dated dogma. But I wonder how he reconciles the apparent contradictions stated above.

Ray Stellingwerff
Surrey, BC

Cross still demonstrates God's love

Hi Ray,

I think you have highlighted a very important question. In the CRC, we have argued for a distinction between "central doctrines and things on which we can agree to differ," but often a non-central doctrine is intimately connected to a major faith item. Our traditional understanding of the death and resurrection of God's Son, Jesus Christ, is as a response to the fall of a historical Adam and Eve and its consequences for creation.

If a historical fall did not occur, then a new narrative is needed to understand the birth, death and resurrection of Christ. I do not have a complete new narrative, but I like the possibility in the current discussion (wonderfully started by Drs Harlow and Schneider) of looking at the scripture story in a fresh way. To me the fact that the Creator became part of his creation and was willing to take into himself the pain that exists in the creation is still important. Why an evolutionary process necessitates cancer, tornados which kill people and structural issues like "the poor will be with you always," I don't understand. But I celebrate the evidence of God's love for his whole creation found in the price he was willing to pay to redeem it and bring it into unity with himself. We traditionally focus on the death of Christ to pay for our sins, but as a father (and grandfather) I know that the Father paid just as high a price seeing his only begotten Son die on the cross – Christ's death was no payment to a loving God the Father. I expect that a new, more complete narrative will develop in our ongoing discussions.

Rudy Eikelboom
Waterloo, Ont.

Find the tale, then tell it

Thank you, Lloyd Rang, for the piece entitled "I alone escaped and have come to tell the tale" (*Christian Courier*, May 9). Too many stories about the tragedies and triumphs of those who survived the horrors of the war in Holland will be lost because those survivors are getting older. In fact, many have already died, taking feelings that were too difficult to express to the grave. Their children are hesitant to write the stories: *Dad never really spoke about it much and now that he is gone, Mom certainly doesn't want to revive all that pain.*

We've heard bits and pieces, but no one has the time or the talent to put it all together. Our kids really are not interested in the past.

Last summer, a friend shared the story of her parents – two ordinary young people who lived during extra-ordinary times. It was a story of young love, a miraculous escape from certain death, a narrative full of holy coincidences and an unshakeable faith in a faithful God. "Has that story been written?" I asked. When she said, "There are no writers in my family," I offered to write the story for her. A story like that simply could not be lost!

My friend's mother agreed to let me interview her, even though she was concerned about going public with something her husband had been so private about. Once we began, the words poured out, often accompanied with tears. When she gave a completed copy to each of her grown children, they said it was heart-warming and heart wrenching, "wonderful to read how their faith turned from one of blind youthful trust to a personal love and faith in God. [It's] a real privilege that Mom has given us this gift of getting to know their early years and the depth of love for each other."

If you want to give that gift to your children, to write the story that needs to be told, here are some ideas.

- If you have living relatives, let them know that you will help. Tell them that your children will be enriched by reading it.
- Let them know that even if parts of the story are about human cruelty and suffering, you know it is also a story of God's grace.
- If there are no writers in your family, ask a friend. If that is not an option, write it yourself. It is a story for your family only. It does not have to be a masterpiece.
- Whoever does the interview, talk through the fears of "bringing up the past" by beginning with childhood memories. Once a story begins, the words will spill out.
- Use a tape or digital recorder instead of a writing pad/computer because active listening is an important part of this project. It will help you to naturally insert those key questions that move the story forward.

A useful internet resource can be found at **greatlifestories.com/pressroom/article3.htm**

Lloyd Rang has challenged you to "tell the tale. Time is precious!" I echo that challenge!

Dora Stroobosscher
St. Catharines, Ont.

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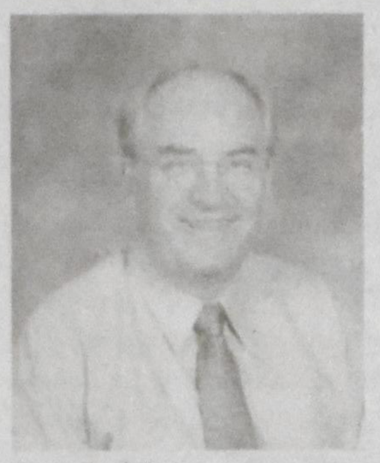
News

CRC nominates new interim director after Dykstra's resignation

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich./BURLINGTON, Ont. (CRCNA) – Rev. Joel Boot has been nominated by the board of trustees of the Christian Reformed Church in North America to serve a two-year term as the denomination's interim executive director.

Boot, who is currently pastor of Ridgewood Christian Reformed Church in Jenison, Michigan, told the board he would do his best to give an answer by June 5. (His answer was not available at press time.)



Rev. Joel Boot.

"It is a tremendous honour and an even larger responsibility," Boot said in an interview. "The invitation is certainly one I take seriously. I am trying to determine if it comes not only from the board but also from God."

The nomination is part of the process of selecting a leader to replace Rev. Jerry Dykstra, who resigned on April 5 after five years as the CRCNA's executive director.

If Boot accepts the nomination, the position would run through June 2013. This will allow time for the taskforce that is currently studying the denomination's structure and culture to complete its work. The board of trustees will ask Synod 2011 to ratify the appointment. Synod meets this year beginning June 10.

Joel Boot has been the pastor at Ridgewood since 1992. Prior to that he served in congregations in Grand Rapids and Dearborn, Michigan, and in Le Mars, Iowa. He has been a delegate to synod nine times. Three of those times he was elected synod's president and once its vice-president. Boot also served two terms on the board of Calvin Theological Seminary, part of that time as board president. He has also been a board member of what is now Faith Alive Christian Resources (formerly CRC Publications).

Famous British comedian-actor launches scathing attack on Christians

Marian Van Til, *with files from TCI and Facebook*

LONDON – Christians who believe that marriage is between one man and one woman are practicing "a kind of Christianity that I don't think would be recognized by Christ," according to John Cleese. Cleese, 71, became famous as a member of Monty Python's Flying Circus, which began its TV show in 1969. He was in four of the five Monty Python movies and in the 1970s gained more fame in the series *Fawlty Towers*. He also had starring roles in several other films, and more recently had small parts in two James Bond, two Harry Potter and three *Shrek* films.

Cleese made his comment during a BBC Radio Merseyside interview in which he also criticized Christian opposition to abortion. He called Christians who maintain a biblical view of marriage "fundamentalists," and he added, "I don't think Christ said a lot about abortion or even about single sex marriage. I don't know where all these Christian doctrines came from but that had nothing to do with what Christ ever said in the Bible."

No understanding

Not everyone has taken Cleese's criticisms with a shrug. On a Facebook page, a Christian who has taken the name "Love Undefiled" wrote, "To reduce Christianity to just what Jesus said in the Bible is a hopelessly simplistic understanding of what it means to be a Christian."

Love Undefiled continued, "What is so great about being a Christian? It is being part of a spiritual family of over one billion followers, a history and heritage unmatched by any other institution on earth, founded by God himself. The church has made substantial contributions towards education, healthcare, alleviation of poverty, walking in the footpaths of saints. How amazing to be part of such an incredible and prosperous heritage. It's not just about a book, but it is about imitating Christ himself. But it is also about standing up for the rights of those who are marginalized, oppressed and persecuted."

The Facebook poster also reacted to Cleese's dismissal of Christian opponents of abortion. "Social justice begins in the womb. In a country where there is a silent holocaust going on, 200,000 children are murdered in the womb every year in Britain. To proclaim a culture of life is one of the most important things that Christians can and must do. The idea that Christians should apathetically stand by while children are being torn apart in the womb limb by limb is simply absurd."

CRWRC responds to Missouri tornado and other major storms

Marian Van Til, *with files from CRCNA*

JOPLIN, Missiouri (CRCNA) – The Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) is collaborating with U.S. federal and local disaster agencies to help devastated families in the hard-hit city of Joplin. The city has 50,000 residents.

Missouri tornado devastation.

"This is the worst spring storm season we've experienced in the U.S. in many years," said Art Opperwall, a program manager with CRWRC Disaster Response Services. Deadly tornados and floods have ripped across a large swath of the Southern and Midwestern United States and, with slightly less ferocity, as far north and east as Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York. In the last month CRWRC has responded to disasters in Sanford, North Carolina and Birmingham, Alabama.

The Joplin tornado left a half-mile-wide band of total destruction through the downtown area, causing power disruptions, fires, gas leaks, communications outages, flattened buildings, and stripped and uprooted trees. One of the city's two medical centers was directly hit and evacuated. A triage unit was set up on the hospital grounds the next morning. At *CC*'s press time the death toll stood at 132, with at least 200 people still missing. At least one couple lost both of their young children, one of them having been literally ripped from his mother's arms.

Seeking $1 million

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the National Guard and public safety and search-and-rescue personnel have been sent into the area from surrounding states. Reports from the National Weather Service, which issued a tornado warning 10-20 minutes before the twister hit Joplin, said that its strength was F-5, the highest on the tornado scale – and a very rare event.

CRWRC-DRS director Bill Adams, along with Art Opperwall and other CRWRC staff, went to Joplin as soon as possible after the storm. Ed and Helen Mulder, Missouri-area regional managers for the agency, monitored the situation along with FEMA and other disaster response partners so that a response plan could be initiated.

Opperwall said, "Devastating disasters like this one call for not only an immediate response, but for reconstruction and rehabilitation that could potentially last several years."

A "Green Shirt" surveys tornado damage.

CRWRC is seeking to raise $1 million to respond to urgent and long-term needs from this year's deadly spring storms. Donations can be made online in either Canadian or American currency at **crwrc.org**. *Click "North American Disaster Response," then "Support the Green Shirts."*

The "Green Shirts" are CRWRC's disaster response volunteers, who can be identified at work sites by – you guessed it – their pleasantly green shirts, emblazoned on the back with "CRWRC."

Egypt: Muslims prevent church re-opening

CAIRO, Egypt (AINA) – One morning last month two Coptic priests and some members of St. Mary and St. Abraham Church in the Cairo suburb of Ain Shams re-opened their church, which had been closed since 2008. Later that day thousands of Muslims surrounded the church in protest, hurling stones at the building and at the Copts, some of whom responded by throwing stones back. The army and police stood and watched, and did not intervene.

Rock pelting during the protest.

Unable to secure the church, the army and police re-closed it and arranged for a "reconciliation" meeting between the Coptic priest and the Salafi sheikhs. Police also arrested eight Copts, one of them 13 years old, and three Muslims. All were charged with rioting, violence and causing injury to citizens.

Unbalanced 'sides'

The "reconciliation" session was held in a tent, hosted by the Islamist imam Kerdassi, the main opponent of the reopening of the church who also recently built a mosque facing the church. Next to the tent was another one occupied by Muslim Brotherhood and Salafi sheikhs and 3000 other Muslims chanting "Islamic, Islamic."

The session lasted five hours and was attended by several Coptic priests, a small number of Coptic church members, sheikhs, imams, priests, lawyers and members of the Muslim Brotherhood. The Muslims insisted the church was a factory and the Christians explained that it was a church. A former clothes factory, it has no dome or bell, but has a consecrated alter and was open as a church from 2004 to 2008. In November 2008 it was forcibly closed by State Security after nearly 3000 Muslims surrounded the church, pelted it with stones and terrorized thousands of parishioners inside.

"The atmosphere of the meeting was belligerent," said attorney Ashraf Edward, "and one of the sheikhs threatened that, should the church be opened without their permission, it would end up like the church in Soul which was demolished by Muslims." Edward said the church was offered a larger place to relocate to, away from Muslim families. The representative of the Ministry of Endowment suggested the church be closed until permission is granted for its opening from the relevant authorities, to which all sides agreed. The Muslims demanded that, should the church be reopened, it must be without cross and dome.

Coptic attorney Dr. Ihab Ramzy said the army and the police did not participate in the "reconciliation" meeting. "This shows the [current army-led] government is ignoring the problem. Am I there to get the Salafis' permission to open the church? If they say no, does this mean I should not open the church?" he asked.

"The joint statement linked the opening of the church with the consent of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces," said activist Mark Ebeid, "so the military council has to know that if the church is not opened, this means the dignity of the State has been lost in front of the Salafis. Everyone believes the government should have carried out its decision to open the church whatever the outcome. The big question now is: will the government give us a written permission or not?"

Worshipers in St. Mary and St. Abraham Church

Piper interviews Warren on biblical doctrine

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. (ChristianPost.com) – Influential Reformed preacher, writer and theologian John Piper recently took the unusual step of interviewing famed pastor and writer Rick Warren, giving him a chance to address the countless criticisms he has received since the publication of *The Purpose Driven Life*. Warren is the pastor of the huge Saddleback Church, which has four "campuses" in southern California.

The entire 98-minute discussion was centered on doctrine, which Warren admitted he is rarely asked about in interviews. But with 40 years of "seriously" studying Scripture under his belt, Warren felt he would have no problem discussing the central tenets of Christianity with a preacher whose fellow Reformed Christians have sometimes taken serious issue with, and not always kindly.

'If I had known' . . .

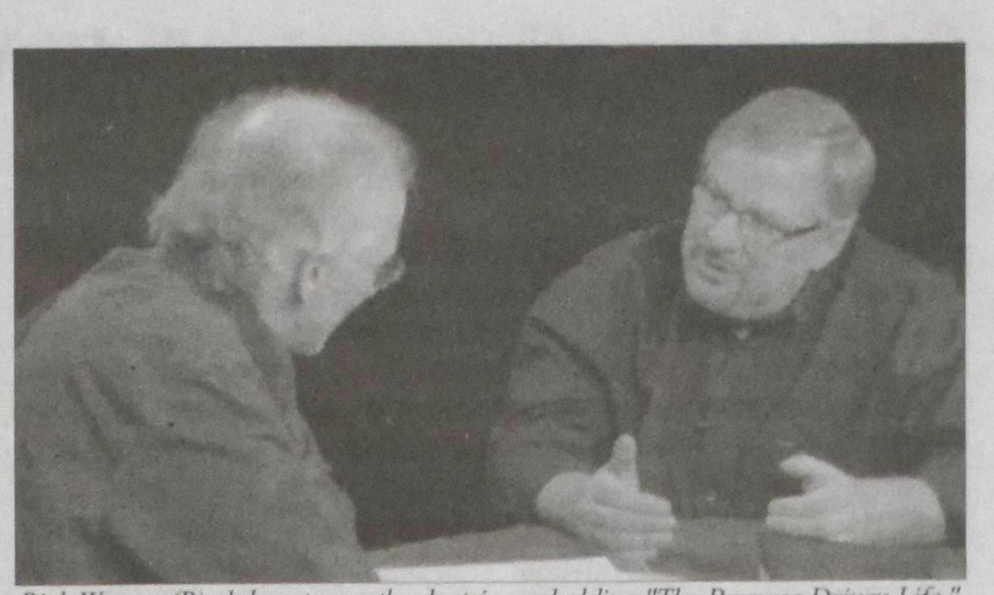
During the interview with Piper, however, Warren revealed that the book was not intended for nonbelievers. It was written as a workbook to accompany Saddleback Church's 40 days of purpose – an annual spiritual growth campaign.

It was only at the end of writing it that he realized a nonbeliever may come across the book and read it. So he added a few things about salvation. "If I had known how many unbelievers were going to read it, I would have explained salvation far much more in detail," he told Piper.

Piper, perhaps surprisingly, did not find any major doctrinal problems in the book. "When I read the book, I thought, 'What's the issue here?'" Piper said. And Piper read the book very carefully, taking 20 pages of notes. Some of what Warren had to say in the bestseller even made Piper's "spine tingle with gladness," he added.

The aim of the interview was to clarify what Warren believes about such doctrines as the glory of God, the sovereignty of God, unconditional election, eternity and the Gospel, among other things.

On the Gospel and the cross, the 57-year-old Warren said he believes in the imputed righteousness of God. "Jesus took our payment. The reason Jesus came to earth is because the law could not do what we needed it to do and only Jesus could do it."



Rick Warren (R) elaborates on the doctrine upholding "The Purpose Driven Life."

Warren also affirmed the "five *solas*" – by Scripture alone, by faith alone, by grace alone, through Christ alone, to the glory of God alone – and said repentance is the fundamental message of Christianity.

"If you listen to my preaching seminar I have an entire session on 'you're not preaching the Gospel unless you're preaching repentance,'" Warren said. He has been criticized for leaving out repentance in the prayer he wrote for nonbelievers in *The Purpose Driven Life*. Piper noted that though Warren might not have explicitly articulated it in his book, the idea of repentance is present throughout the entire book.

Warren – who started preaching at 16 – noted that some people view repentance as a change in behaviour. But such a change is not the root; it is rather the fruit of repentance, the mega-church pastor contended. One's *mind* has to shift first, he said.

God meant it for good

On the sovereignty of God, Warren said a person's mistakes, sins and weaknesses are all part of God's plan. "I would say God custom designed my weaknesses," he asserted. "I'm not making God responsible for my sin. I believe that my own weaknesses are Father-filtered and just as much as God touched Jacob's hip and he walked with a limp the rest of his life, that I have certain emotional weaknesses that are there to keep me dependent upon God."

He continued, "How does God make us like his son? I have found both from Scripture and from experience that God allows us [to be] in the exact opposite situation in order to teach us character. God teaches me love by putting me around unlovely people."

Sin is folded into the plan of God also, Warren affirmed. He used abortion to illustrate his point. Warren has often said, "There are accidental parents but there are no accidental children. You may not have planned your kid, but God did. And I believe that with all my heart." God, he added, used the sin of the women listed in the genealogy of Christ for his own glory. Essentially, Warren put the banner of "what you meant for evil God meant for good" over all sins.

Warren agreed to the interview with Piper after he was unable to speak at last year's Desiring God conference (the annual preaching conference hosted by Piper's Desiring God ministry) as he had been previously scheduled to do.

Piper drew some flak last year when he invited Warren to speak alongside some theological heavy-weights, including R. Albert Mohler and R.C. Sproul. Some supporters of Desiring God complained, arguing that Warren was not on the same page with them theologically or doctrinally. They felt Warren relied more on pragmatism than on biblical doctrine.

While Warren is not known for being a doctrinal preacher, Piper noted that one reason for this "is his intention to be theologically sound and practically helpful without using doctrinal or theological terms in his public ministry." But inside Saddleback Church "there is a greater intentionality about building biblical and theological categories into the people's minds and hearts," Piper affirmed.

Warren made that clear during the interview as well. "I would take the doctrinal knowledge of any 500 Saddleback members and compare it to any 500 members of any other church and we'd beat them," he said.

Though a Baptist and a Calvinist (like Piper), Warren refuses to call himself either one, partly because of some negative connotations. Rather, he calls himself a "John 3:16 Christian" and an evangelical who believes the doctrine of grace.

Warren also had a few words for his fellow Calvinists, who are some of his harshest critics. "I say this in true love: I wish that those who believe in the doctrine of grace would be more gracious."

News

Colonizing elk cause crop damage concerns

TELKWA, B.C. – People in all parts of Canada are encountering wildlife in new and sometimes frustrating ways. Deer eat spinach in gardens and devour tulips in planters. Coyotes show up in Nova Scotia towns, sometimes attacking pets. Bears wander the streets of North Vancouver and cougars come near towns in Alberta and B.C. The raccoon may have to replace the beaver as national emblem if the experience of Greater Toronto is any test for ubiquity. In the Bulkley Valley of British Columbia, where people are used to bears and moose wandering about, elk are causing concern to area farmers and ranchers.

Winter – 1996: "Did you see those big animals near Deep Creek? They were sure gorgeous, especially the makes with those big antlers. Were they caribou or elk?"

Winter – 2011: "The elk were at Round Lake today – you know, across from the little church – and I saw some back in a field not too far from Vic's Garage. Right around 8 a.m. is a good time to see them."

Crop damage by a relatively new herd of elk: that was the topic discussed by eight farmers from the Bulkley Valley of central B.C. in a meeting facilitated by Bill Jex, a regional wildlife biologist for the provincial government.

Unknown in the Bulkley Valley for the past 60 or more years, Rocky Mountain elk have been colonizing the valley for the past 15 years. The elk herd is concentrated in the Telkwa/Quick area of the valley, where a February 2011 helicopter survey spotted 48 elk. Other sightings suggest that a number as high as 100 elk are now living in the rural area.

A refined palate

Rocky Mountain elk are heavy grazers. Unlike the coastal Roosevelt elk, Rocky Mountain elk are not restricted to brushy browse of logging blocks. They prefer instead the pastures, hayfields and haystacks of the agricultural sectors of the valley.

This preference for grass has led to a considerable amount of damage done to stored hay during the winter and late spring. According to Glenn Kerr, the elk are aggressive, even chasing heavy horses away from hay feeders. (Mr. Kerr can demonstrate the presence

of the elk with his collection of shed antlers, all collected from his farm.) A previous government program, providing partial funding for construction of eight-foot-high fencing for stored hay, has expired.

Perhaps a more serious problem is elk damage to reseeded forage crops. After plowing, disking, rock-picking, more rock-picking, seeding and packing is finished, the last thing a farmer wants is hungry elk destroying fragile new seeding. Robert Kirsh, a local specialist in growing alfalfa, is frustrated to see the results of his field work being limited by wildlife that are not even native to the area. (Moose are also not "native" to the area, having moved into the area in relatively recent historical times.)

The solution to the damage, say some people, is more fencing, perhaps fencing entire fields or farms. Wayne Tofsrud, a local cattleman and member of the B.C. Cattleman's Association, says that the cost of elk-proof fencing is roughly $10,000 per kilometre. This is a daunting, prohibitive price, especially for beef producers, who have gone seven years without seeing a profit on their sales.

Complicating matters is the fact that the British Columbia government does not even have an agricultural agent in the Bulkley Valley. The nearest is in Prince George. Four regional wildlife biologists are strained to cover the area from Endako to Yukon. A serious commitment by the provincial government to agriculture and wildlife in an area as large as many countries is far overdue.

When wildlife invades

Other suggested solutions include simply eliminating the elk herd entirely. But live-trapping would likely be impossible and shooting the entire herd is probably socially unacceptable. That leaves farmers in a bind. Farmers don't mind seeing a few elk, says dairy farmer Yannick Heer. No farmers complained about unintentionally "feeding" a few elk, but a small herd of 20 or 30 animals wreaks havoc.

Another suggestion is to open the general hunting season for elk. It is doubtful that a herd of 48 animals can sustain a general

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Technically Speaking

Derek Schuurman

Computers that speak your language

Recently I had a conversation with a computer. More specifically, I spoke with a so-called "chatbot," a computer program written to mimic intelligent conversation. Many websites today employ chatbots to provide customer assistance, entertain or help people navigate websites. My Internet service provider has a chatbot named "Amy" on its website, and just for fun I typed in a few questions:

Me: Hello.

Amy: Hello, how may I help you?

Me: Do you dream?

Amy: Good question. I am not sure how to answer that. Please try rewording your question. I understand simple questions best.

Me: Do you read *Christian Courier*?

Amy: I don't claim any expertise in the realm of human spirituality, but I do believe that it takes all kinds of people and ideas to shape a healthy society.

It seems this particular chatbot is a postmodern relativist. When queried with a technical question about an Internet connection, however, the chatbot's reply was much more helpful (you can talk to Amy at **www.shaw.ca**). Chatbots don't get tired, they work around the clock, and they don't get impatient with customers. Chatbots can also be used maliciously, spreading advertising in online chatrooms or posing as humans to entice people to reveal personal information.

At the lowest level, computers actually have their own native "language." It's really just a primitive sequence of 1's and 0's that represent basic computational operations. Programs called compilers are used to translate higher-level programming languages into the computer's native language. Numerous programming languages have been developed, but they are vastly different from human language. Over the years, computer scientists have struggled to program computers to understand human language, a field known as natural language processing. This remains one of the great challenges in artificial intelligence (AI) research. Human language is extremely complex; it can include intricate nuances, prior knowledge, humour and complex idioms that don't always compute.

I, Robot

In his famous 1950 paper titled "Computing Machinery and Intelligence," the computer pioneer Alan Turing described an "imitation game" which involved a human interrogator, another human, and a digital computer. The interrogator is placed in a separate room and exchanges messages with the computer and the other human to determine which is which. Turing suggested that if the interrogator could not reliably identify which was the computer, the computer could be said to be "intelligent." This imitation game has since become known as the Turing Test. For the last two decades, a contest has been held each year for the Loebner Prize, a grand prize offered for the first computer whose responses would be indistinguishable from that of a human. At the time of writing, the Turing Test has yet to be reliably won by a computer.

Nonetheless, many clever chatbot programs have been written. An early example of a chatbot program was ELIZA, a computer simulation of a Rogerian psycho-therapist written by a computer scientist named Joseph Weizenbaum in the 1960s. It worked by using simple pattern matching techniques, but Weizenbaum was startled to observe how some people were emotionally drawn in by ELIZA. Weizenbaum found these reactions to his program troubling, and later wrote a book describing some of his thoughts on the limitations of AI.

The philosopher John Searle argued that even though computers can simulate human conversation, they will never have understanding. He presented his argument by introducing the "Chinese room" thought experiment. In this experiment, a person who understands only English is locked in a room and messages written in Chinese are passed into the room. Searle describes how such as person could be given detailed instructions on how to give back certain Chinese symbols in response to the shapes of the Chinese symbols he receives. To those outside the room, it would appear as if someone in the room understands Chinese – even though he does not. Searle argues that a computer is essentially a symbol processing machine, and will never understand the way that humans do.

To suppose that computers could one day be like humans is a reductionistic view of what it means to be human. Even if one day chatbots like Amy are clever enough to pass the Turing Test, they will – as Searle says – never have understanding. There is no substitute for genuine human communication, which is a gift from God. If all you need is a weather update or some technical assistance, however, you might find a chatbot helpful, even if it won't win a subscription for *Christian Courier*.

Dr. Derek Schuurman teaches Computer Science at Redeemer University College. You can speak with him at dschuurman@cs.redeemer.ca, as long as you are a real human and not a chatbot.

News

Comment:

Canadian bilingualism is *un peu fou*

James Schipper

If Peter and Paul speak different languages, communication can occur if only one speaks the language of the other. It isn't necessary that both be bilingual. Many Canadians seem to overlook this elementary insight and think that bilingualism should be maximized.

For most people in this world, mastering a second language is a burden rather than a pleasure. And burdens should be minimized, not maximized. It is a simple fact that inter-lingual communication can be maximized and the burden of learning a second language minimized if speakers of the smaller language learn the larger language.

In Canada, this means that French Canadians should learn English and not the other way around. Rational bilingualism in Canada would be guided by three basic principles: minimize French outside Quebec, minimize English in Quebec, minimize bilingualism. There is absolutely no need for official bilingualism in seven provinces, and in Ontario, NB and Quebec, official bilingualism should be confined to those areas where relative and absolute numbers warrant. These principles would considerably reduce linguistic friction in Canada. Don't forget that Switzerland, the most successful trilingual country in the world, rigidly applies the territorial principle. No French in Zürich and no German in Genève.

As to the misnamed French immersion schools, they exist because of the career obsessions of parents and students, not because of a keen interest in French. I say that they are misnamed because it is quite impossible to immerse a student body in a teaching staff. They should be called French instruction schools.

The most sensible book written about language in Canada is *Lament for a Notion: the Life and Death of Canada's Bilingual Dream* by Scott Reid. It argues convincingly that Canada is becoming more and more a country of two unilingual parts: a French-speaking Quebec and the English-speaking rest. Needless to say, Scott Reid was fired from his position as [PM Stephen] Harper's adviser some time ago. Realism or frankness in language matters is not wanted by Canada's elite. Canada's language policy is determined mainly by elite fashions, not by practical considerations or popular opinion.

People in places like Swift Current, Halifax and Victoria have too much common sense to believe the official nonsense about bilingualism. If 20 percent of Franco-Quebeckers and two percent of Anglos outside Quebec were bilingual, that would be quite enough. However, we can be sure that, as long the Canadian elite remains enamoured of bilingualism, the official creed will remain: the more bilingualism the better.

Si vous pensez que je suis hostile à la langue française, vous pouvez me répondre en français.

À la prochaine fois.

James Schipper lives in London, Ontario.

An anniversary in context: What came before the KJV

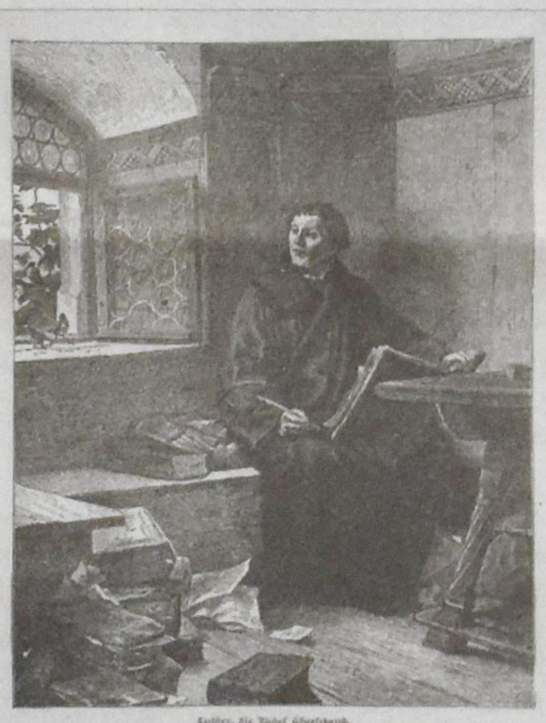
Bert den Boggende

The publication of the King James Version (KJV) in 1611, also called the Authorized Version (AV), was the culmination of a thousand-year-long tradition of Bible translations into English. Around 700, after some paraphrases of, for example, Genesis, bishop Aldhelm produced the first genuine – and preserved – translation of the Psalter. The beautifully illustrated Lindisfarne Gospels, now in the British Museum, exemplify English glosses accompanying the Latin text. The Wessex Gospels were the first independent gospels in Old English. Abbot Aelfric of Eynsham (7th century) translated parts of the first seven books of the Old Testament.

Lindisfarne Gospels exemplify glosses.

While no complete versions of Middle English have survived, there were versions of the Psalms, gospels and chief epistles. Matthew's version of the Lord's Prayer may give you a sense of Middle English: "*Oure Fader that art in heuene, halowed be thi name. Thi kingdom come to us. Thi wylle be don, as in heuene, and in erthe . . . .*"

For John Wycliffe (c.1330-1384), church reform included making the Bible available to everyone in the vernacular. Although the first translation of the whole Bible is associated with his name, "it is doubtful," as F.F. Bruce observed, "if Wycliffe himself took any direct part in the work." An example of the first version, a stiff word-for-word translation from the Latin Vulgate, comes from Hebr. 1:1: "*Manyfold and many maners sum tyme God spekinge to fadris and prophetis, at the laste in thes daies spak to us in the sone.*" In the second version this became "*God, that spak sum tyme bi prophetis in many maneres to oure fadris, at the laste in these daies he hath spoke to vs bi the sone.*" These translations, however different from modern English, influenced subsequent versions.



Luther translates the Bible.

Revision debates

Sixteenth century translators had the benefit of the printing press, Erasmus' Greek New Testament and a complete Hebrew Bible. William Tyndale was the first one to make use of these new tools, publishing a New Testament in 1525 (revised in 1534 and 1536). Before his martyrdom in 1536, he had translated several Old Testament books, for which he used the Vulgate and Luther's German version. In 1535, Miles Coverdale produced the first complete translation in English, dedicated to Henry VIII. For his OT he employed the Swiss Reformers' Zurich Bible, Tyndale's translated sections, the Vulgate and an Italian translation, and for the NT he revised Tyndale's NT. While his translations are derivative, he made some significant changes, including the separation of the canonical from the apocryphal books and the introduction of chapter summaries, such as "Christ fasteth and is tempted."

The next year Matthew's Bible, a revision of Tyndale and Coverdale, appeared. Revised, it became the sumptuously printed – with numbered verses – Great Bible of 1538, a copy of which "should be chained to the desk in every parish church." While Bibles were burned under Mary's reign, no steps were taken against the Great Bible. However, Protestants fled to the continent and in 1560 some of them produced the Genevan Bible, a revision of the Great Bible. It was immediately popular – 144 editions appeared between 1560 and 1644 – but its controversial notes were unacceptable to Elizabeth I and the hierarchy. Consequently, in 1568 another version was published, the Bishops' Bible, a revision of the Great Bible. Protestants, regarding this version as a regression, clamoured for still another version. But it was not until James I called a conference at Hampton Court in January 1604 that it was resolved "That a translation be made of the whole Bible, as consonant as can be to the original Hebrew and Greek." The translation, based on the *Textus Receptus* and begun in 1607, was completed by six companies from Oxford, Cambridge and Westminster. According to one author, they incorporated 90 percent of Tyndale's NT text. Except references to variant readings, no notes were inserted. Ecclesiastical terms, such as bishop, were retained and until 1629 this version included the Apocrypha.

The King James Version was finally published in 1611 with royal authority. Over the past 400 years, developments in language (for example, "thou" and "you" switched meaning) and scholarship have necessitated several revisions, and the version most people are familiar with is the 1769 edition. Glaring misprints produced the Wicked Bible ("Thou shalt commit adultery"), the Vinegar Bible (Lk 20, vinegar for vineyard), and the Murderers' Bible (Mk 7:27, "Let the children first be killed"). In spite of these misprints, the KJV has exerted great influence on the English language in four centuries, but its language is now outdated and its understanding of Hebrew and Greek inadequate.

More background

F.F. Bruce, *History of the English Bible* (New York: Oxford UP, 1978).
For a somewhat different approach, see **Wikipedia.org** and Dr. Laurence M. Vance, **av1611.org/kjv/kjvhist.hmtl.**

Bert den Boggende lives in Brooks, Alberta.

Elk *continued*

hunting season. As the herd grows any larger, a sustainable population and a general hunting season probably will be possible, but whether a traditional fall general hunting season will solve the problem is unlikely.

Most damage results from elk crop depredation outside of normal fall hunting seasons anyway. Some people suggest that a type of limited entry hunt might be a solution. When a limited entry hunt (LEH) was tried in the Peace River area some years ago, co-operation between biologists, farmers/ranchers, and hunters successfully reduced impacts from wild elk for several years. Since then elk populations have rebounded in the Peace.

Such a limited type of hunt would concentrate on harvesting a few animals when they are doing the damage, causing a disruption that moves the herd out of the immediate area and giving relief for the farmer and crop. A program of this type near Francois Lake met with some success, from a rancher's point of view. There, special hunts discourage deer concentrations and damage during the winter season, after the general hunting season is finished.

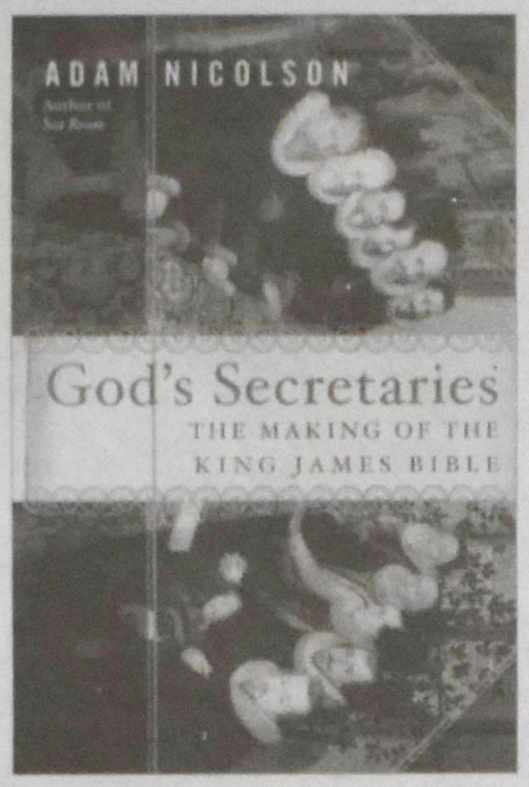
None of the farmers at the meeting favoured the route of asking for crop damage compensation. Money makes the problem sound as if it were simply one of raising crops so that a local visible elk herd can be maintained. They are interested in being able to pursue their livelihood in their home area and are more than willing to share their land with various forms of wildlife, like moose and bears, but a pioneering population of elk is something else again.

Not simply a matter of farming or wildlife, the issue of a new population of elk is prompting a concerted effort by farmers, biologists and the general public to find ways in which flourishing, diverse wildlife populations are not seen as opposed to a vibrant agriculture.

Curt Gesch (curtgesch@hotmail.com) lives in Telkwa, BC.

Reviews

Returning to the king's court: the story behind the King James Version



"Its grandeur of phrasing and the deep slow music of its rhythms . . . were conscious embodiments of regal glory."(xiv)

Rev. John Koole

In his fascinating tale of the production of the King James Bible (KJV), Adam Nicolson makes a very convincing case that we have lost much of the Word in putting aside the historic translation that is, this year, 400 years old. The Authorized Version (AV), as it is also known, is a translation that is meant to be *heard;* its somewhat ceremonial rhythms drawing us into the awe of living in the presence of God. He argues that there is more to meaning than factual accuracy, more to what God communicates than what the flattened language of technology and documentary offers us, and his criticism of modern sterility of style can be devastating.

The age of the court of King James, Shakespearean theatre and early English Puritan exposition was indeed a unique time in which the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures were brought into a rich, moving English. It was an age of envisioning by way of words, rather than physical illustration, and of heightening religious experience through language. As Miles Smith writes in his splendid preface to the AV, "Translation it is that openeth the window to let in the light, that breaketh the shell that we may eat the kernel, that putteth aside the curtain that we may look into the most Holy Place, that removeth the cover of the well that we may come by the water."

On the other hand, Nicolson very definitively dispels any notion that the KJV is the work of extraordinary saints of God. Many of the chief translators were money-grubbing, persecuting, arrogant and corrupt rogues. James VI of Scotland, the disputatious son of Mary Queen of Scots, was taken from his mother and made king of the impoverished realm under Presbyterian guardianship. Thirty-five years later, as Elizabeth's heir, he became King James I of England when the queen died in 1603. Suddenly he was wealthy and could bestow the wealth of England on the handsome young men with which he liked to surround himself. Reared a Calvinist, James turned from Presbyterians and Puritans to side with authoritarian English bishops who were more amenable when it came to his own view of kingship. A man of peace, James dreamed of uniting Protestant England under his own benevolent rule. A new Bible translation, he hoped, would crowd out the hated English version from Geneva with its notes disdaining bishops and royal pretense and promote his program of unification. Thus James had a strong hand in framing the rules for the work of translation, along with Richard Bancroft, then Archbishop of Canterbury. There were to be 50 translators, divided into six groups, including one to translate the Apocrypha, which only centuries later began to be omitted from editions of the Bible. Final revisions would be made by plenary sessions of the groups.

Nicholson gives fascinating stories of what is known of the piety, talent, experience, as well as the wickedness of individual translators. He quotes many passages of Scripture and compares rendering of texts, pointing out felicities of translation.

There are interesting asides on how poorly the new version was at first published by Robert Barker, with no copy the same as another, and how slow it was in replacing the Genevan Bible. The early settlers of America, for instance, would have none of this Authorized Version, but amazingly the KJV later became part of the American heritage, for the Separatist Bible of the Puritans was not adequate for uniting a nation.

The AV, by way of its careful testing, is remarkably accurate. Its stories are told simply, yet brilliantly in majestic and beautiful prose. It sounds nothing at all like a memo on our fridge or like a note from school as do more modern translations. It continues to bring us before the majesty of a heavenly sovereign and the dignity of his obedient son. We would do well in this anniversary year – after experiencing a glimpse, through the royal wedding, into what remains of Jacobean glory, to turn again to read through this 400-year-old translation that Nicolson writes "can lay claim to be the greatest work in prose ever written in English . . . with its grandeur of phrasing and the deep slow music of its rhythms." John Calvin spoke of the apostles as like secretaries of God. The English speaking world owes much to the 50 diverse scholars James I and Bancroft chose as secretaries to bring God's word into clear and dignified English, a monument for 400 years of the possibilities of a language to give light and vision.

God's Secretaries, the Making of the King James Bible
by Adam Nicolson: HarperCollins, 2003
(in G.B. *Power and Glory*)

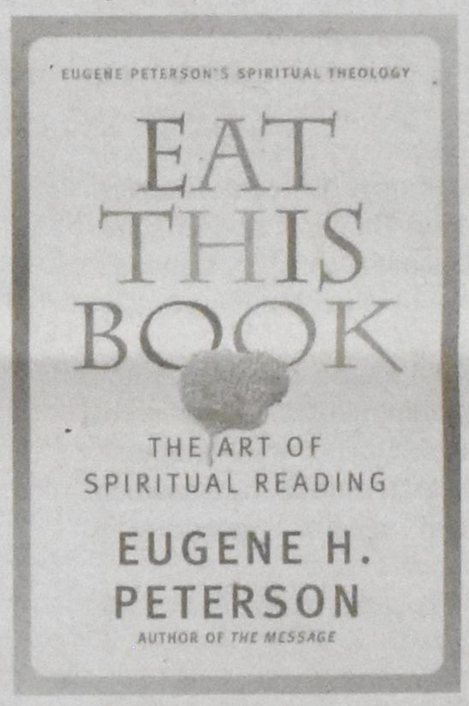
John Koole (jmvkoole@aol.com) was born in Allendale, N.J., and has lived in Canada since 1969. He studied at the VU in Amsterdam and has a doctorandus from Berkouwer but never wrote a thesis. He retired from his life's work as a CRC pastor and is currently living in Strathroy.

Rummaging through garbage dumps: the Word of God in everyday language

Nick Schuurman

Like a lot of folks, I studied Greek in college. And like a lot of folks, I can hardly remember a word of what I learned. Depending on how intellectually arrogant I want to come across when people ask me about the languages I've attempted to learn, I like to point out that I studied *Biblical* Greek, and not the Classical variation of the ancient language. And if I want to sound even more like someone who used to know just enough of an ancient language to pass my finals, I could say that scholars call it *Koine* – meaning common, or vulgar Greek. So, what's the difference?

For centuries, the New Testament puzzled translators. Imagine you had a dictionary that contained all the words that are used from Matthew to Revelation. Approximately one-tenth of those words occur nowhere else in the entire canon of Greek literature. Not in the *Odyssey*, not in Plato's *Republic*, nowhere. These words, along with differences in grammar and syntax, lead a lot of people to hypothesize that the language of the Greek Bible was some sort of new combination of Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic. Others described it as a sort of super-spiritual, "Holy Ghost language." Speculation and theories continued to float around until sometime about a century ago. During the course of archeological excavations in Egypt, these mystery words began showing up, in an ancient dump of all places. All of the sudden, the language of God-breathed Scripture was discovered on the likes of letters, wills, receipts and shopping lists. It became clear that the Greek of the New Testament was simply the vernacular of ordinary, everyday life – the stuff of emails and fridge-magnet memos.



"The most important question we ask of this text is not, 'What does this mean?' but "'What can I obey?'" (71)

Eat This Book, written by Presbyterian pastor and author Eugene Peterson, tells this story and unpacks its incredible implications for how we understand the Bible. God did not choose the language of philosophers or kings, nor did he speak in the polished form and measured metre of Shakespearean verse. He stooped to deliver revelation.

Having made this discovery in the course of his own life as a student of the Bible, and later as a teacher of Greek and Hebrew, Peterson recalls moving away from academia into a pastoral position. What he encountered there startled him, but probably won't startle us at all: people showed next to no interest in reading the Bible. Those who had heard it before were bored of it, finding themselves alienated by the dull familiarity of having been exposed to it their whole life. And those who tried opening its pages for the first time were met with its strange language, and, uninterested, put it back on the shelf. Sounds familiar, right?

Ambitious to do all he can to see his congregation's appetite for Scripture brought back, Peterson comes up with a plan. Why not translate the text in a way that reflects the fact that it first came in the language of everyday speech? The resulting efforts, which the church ate up, would later be collected and published as his famous paraphrase, *The Message*.

To be clear, everything I have just described constitutes only the final portion of the book. Divided into three parts, *Eat This Book* is a call to crave and consume Scripture. Peterson lays the groundwork in the first section of the book, in which he asserts that *how* we read the Bible is as important as the fact that we are reading it. Do we view Scripture as a collection of information we can nod at, or a bunch of bullet-point principles we can use to live better lives? Or is there something deeper and mysterious to the feast of words?

Reading scripture in this transformative kind of way is aided, Peterson suggests in the book's second section, by the ancient practice of *Lectio Divina.* He breaks the method down: *lectio* is a straightforward reading; *meditatio* is a reading of the text in which one listens for any verse or word that the Spirit would make stick in one's memory; in *oratio*, one responds in prayer in light of the passage; *contemplatio* is the effort to live out what has just been read, meditated on, and prayed.

For anyone struggling to stay put while sitting in front of the Bible, I cannot recommend this book, *The Message* and the practice of *Lectio Divina* enough. While by no means replacements for discipline, the work of the Spirit, or the necessary labours of prayer and study, they are helpful resources and tools for a parched soul.

Eat This Book: A Conversation in the Art of Spirjtual Reading
by Eugene Peterson. Grand Rapids, MI: W. Eerdmans Co., 2005.

Nick Schuurman (reviews@christiancourier.ca) serves as CC's Reviews Editor.

Reviews

Was Babel all bad? A philosopher's take on what to do with interpretive differences

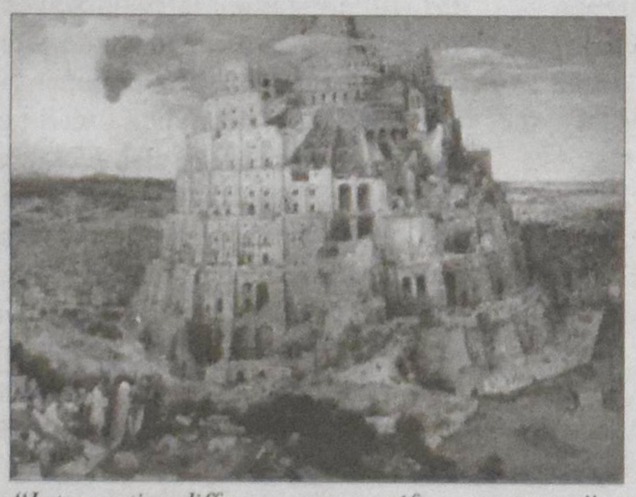
Spencer Boersma

James K. A. Smith's book, *The Fall of Interpretation,* sets out to do something odd, yet surprising. He attempts to give an interpretation of interpretation. As Smith, who currently serves as professor of philosophy at Calvin College, recalls, this book had its genesis in his experience of exclusion in Christian circles growing up. To interpret differently, automatically, for many Christians, means you must be interpreting wrong. To have a slightly different language to understand your faith in Christ, automatically makes that faith suspect.

If you ask me, Smith has pegged the Achilles heel of Protestantism. This is the great failure of our Protestant heritage: differences in faith. See, if all of us hold to the authority of the Bible, *sola scriptura,* the general assumption was and still is that all of us will come to the same interpretation of key, if not all, texts. We are guaranteed this, according to Calvin, by the inner witness of the Holy Spirit. Why would the Holy Spirit convict two believers of two different interpretations of the same text? This would be absurd! And so, here is the problem: the reformation did not produce one unified interpretation of the Bible. In fact, the opposite happened: Reformers differed from Catholics, Anabaptists differed from Reformers, Calvinists, Arminians, Dispensationalists, and on and on it went.

With this little bit of background in mind, let's go back to Smith's book. Smith asks some simple questions: Is interpretation wrong, a fallen affair? Are all differences dangerous? Smith notes an interesting insight in the story of the tower of Babel. Most interpreters in Christian history assume that the creation of diversity was a curse and a punishment for arrogance. Interestingly enough, Smith notes that the creation of linguistic differences was done, instead, to restore human dependence on God and to better fulfill the command to multiply. Interpretive difference was a gift, not a curse.

Thus, Smith develops what he calls a "Creational Hermeneutic." In this, Smith deconstructs Augustine's Platonism with Augustine's Christianity. For instance, Augustine viewed language and any distortion that occurs due to the limits of language as a result of the fall. Before the fall, language must have been characterized by perfection of its conveyance of meaning and by its accuracy of its interpretation of reality. So, in theory, there was only one perfect interpretation pre-fall according to Augustine. In the eschaton, or eternal kingdom, Augustine speculated that language will probably be replaced with some sort of perfect non-verbal communication. However, Smith argues contrary to Augustine that we will never be anything more than finite. Humans were created finite. So, at all times we are limited to their points of view, situated in time. Humans will never know fully. In the eschaton, we will only know rightly, untainted by sin. Also, there is no indication that language was a result of the fall or that it will be eliminated in the eschaton.



"Interpretive difference was a gift, not a curse."

For Smith, language must be a part of human beings' blessed nature that God approved of in the creation account. With this, the distinction between finite human sign and reality (whether in creation or in the divine) is as good as the distinction between creature and creator itself. So, the interpretive quality of language is not something to be saved from; it is something to cherish a part of human creatureliness. Moreover, different interpretations of the same object should be considered "very good" since they are part of the original pre-fall constitution of humans. So, there can be more than one set of interpretations describing and conveying the meaning of God's love, but that does not plunge theology into relativism.

With that, Smith embarks on an ambitious critique of important theologians and philosophers. From evangelical theologians Rex Koivisto and Richard Lints to German theologian Wolfhart Pannenberg and philosophers Hans-Georg Gadamer, Jurgen Habermas, Martin Heidegger and Jacque Derrida.

The question then becomes what to do with the plurality of differences in Christianity: Does Smith's proposal propel us to be relativists, giving up all hope of unity? No. The final part of the book lays out an interesting "Pentecostal" contribution to theology. While he chastises rationalist certainty, he looks to revelation, faith and hope. In other words, through simple faith in the name of the one who has revealed himself and bestowed complete love on us, a love that is able to overcome any barrier of difference, a love that we are called to reflect in a world of differences, through this, we have the hope that our interpretations are unified and justified in the Spirit.

In a world that is exploding with differences, in a world where the division between Christians is paralyzing the witness of the church, Smith's book is a must-read philosophical foundation for healing the wounds between Christian differences.

The Fall of Interpretation: Philosophical Foundations for a Creational Hermeneutic
by James K.A. Smith. Downer's Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2000.

Spencer Boersma (spencer.boersma@utoronto.ca) lives in Bradford, Ontario, with his wife Meagan and son Rowan. He is currently working toward a Th.D in Systematic Theology at Wycliffe College in conjunction with the Institute of Christian Studies. He blogs at **afterorthodoxy.blogspot.com**.

Film gives voice to the lost language of Australia's Stolen Generations

Bethany Van Lingen

Molly Craig stands with her mother, Maud, looking up at the sky in the opening scenes of the film, *Rabbit-Proof Fence*. A bird flies high above the two of them. It's a spirit bird, explains Maud, portrayed by Nigali Lawford. It will be with Molly, played by Everlyn Sampi, wherever she goes. Maud speaks in the language of an indigenous people of Australia. Her arm is tight around Molly's shoulders.

But who could know that Molly would be taken 1200 miles from her home in Jigalong, a small town in the Australian outback? Fourteen-year-old Molly, her sister, Daisy Craig and cousin, Gracie Fields are thrown into the back of Constable Rigg's car.

The girls are known as "half-castes," having white fathers and aboriginal mothers. In 1931, according to government policy, the girls could be legally taken from their homes and placed in government-run schools. Mr. A.O. Neville, Chief Protector of Aborigines, played by Kenneth Branagh, has called for Molly, Daisy and Gracie to be placed in one such school. The girls will be trained as house help. They will be English.

Molly's mother screams at the police officer in English as he picks up each girl and shoves them into the back seat of his car. "These are my kids! Mine!" Jason Clarke as Constable Riggs replies, "I've got the papers. You've got no say in it!"

The girls will be taken to the Moore River Native Settlement. There, they will sleep in a dormitory, eat porridge, pray and speak only English. All of these things are unfamiliar and bewildering to the girls.

"I know it all feels very strange but in a few days you'll feel right at home. We're here to help you and encourage you in this new world," Neville says to the girls. This encouragement looks more like a scolding for speaking their own language. Gracie comments in her language to her cousins about the new clothes she has been given. "This is your new home," nurse Miss Jessop says. "We don't use that jibber jabber here. We speak English."

Through these schools, Neville is working to prevent the creation of a "third race" of half-caste people. He believes that Aboriginal features and skin tone can be overtaken in favour of white traits after three generations of exposure to white blood. If half-caste children are to be "saved," they must adopt European customs and language, as each generation of these children is made more a part of white Australia.

But Molly will not give up her family. She is told by another girl at Moore River that the children "have no mothers."

"Bad place. Makes me sick, these people. Makes me sick," Molly says to herself, thinking over the conversation in her bed that night. Disgusted, she leaves Moore River with her sister and cousin the next morning. She will make the 1500 mile walk home rather than see her memories of her family erased.

The most tragic part of the film is to see what Molly has lost, despite her determination to return home. She will always be somewhere between Moore River and home, tapping the rabbit proof fence and hoping her mother can feel the rhythm from back home. The barbed wire and posts look familiar. Sections of it were built by their fathers. But this fence is the white man's construction and the white man's maps are truer than posts and wire in the desert sand.

"This is your new home. We don't use that jabber here. You speak English."

For the many other survivors of residential schools in Australia, called the Stolen Generations, this films captures the story of a loss too great. Watching this film in Canada, we are painfully aware of how similar this story is to the histories of our own residential schools, in which Aboriginal children were taken from their families.

Molly, Daisy and Gracie have lost a part of their childhoods. Because of the colour of their skin, they have had to give up their own culture for that of the whites. These three girls are left mourning their broken families and a loss of understanding of their own culture and language. Molly will not speak the aboriginal language for the rest of the film. She will speak English. It is tied to her now, just as are the plain, European clothes issued at Moore River.

But Molly has not forgotten about the spirit bird. It will follow her as she walks across the desert, searching for home.

Rabbit Proof Fence
directed by Phillip Noyce, based on the novel by Doris Pilkington, 2002.

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Features

In our November 8th, 2010 isse, *CC* reviewed Samuel Thomas Martin's book, *This Ramshackle Tabernacle*. Contributing editor Cathy Smith wrote:

"Doug, a failed camp counsellor, wears his rage openly, but tucks his shame away. Drug addict Harold commits murder. Ben leBou stabs his abusive father. Upon his release from prison, he gets mauled by a grizzly, survives, sort of, and finally, calling out to God, tries to shoot himself in an agony of multiplied pain.

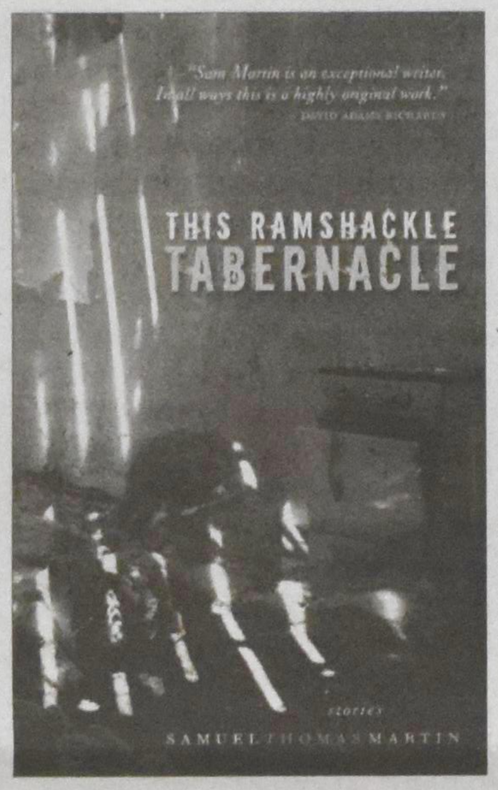
After you blink to reduce the intensity of this magnified focus on the sordid and horrific, you begin to discern that a heart of glory glimmers in the midst of all this darkness. God dwells here. Just as he did in the Old Testament, lodged in a portable temple among a stiff-necked and stubborn people, God has pitched his tent with these tainted characters from the Muskokas. His holiness is a tarp hanging over Doug and Harold and Ben whether they know it or not." She concluded: "These stories invite me to look my neighbour in the eye, and see God looking back at me."

In this special issue devoted to God's gift of language, *CC* invited Sam Martin to share some of his thoughts on writing and "bad words."

Writing about God and using the f-word

Samuel Thomas Martin

Someone asked me recently how I could write about God and use the F-word. She was referring to my short story collection *This Ramshackle Tabernacle* and the colourful language some of the characters in those stories use. The question caught me off guard and I gave her a half-baked answer. But the question was a good one and deserves a better explanation, which I will try to give here.


"Sam Martin is an exceptional writer. In all ways this is a highly original work."
THIS RAMSHACKLE TABERNACLE
stories
SAMUEL THOMAS MARTIN

Rudy Wiebe has said in his memoir *Of this earth* that for him the F-word belonged to the sewer of language along with demeaning sexual jokes and innuendoes. On the other side of the country you have David Adams Richards' early novel *Blood Ties* being critically trashed for consistent use of the F-bomb. But both writers come from faith perspectives (one Mennonite and the other Catholic).

So, WTF (or **W**hat's **T**he **F**lipside to all this)? Yes, the F-word is a turd in language's sewer. But it's also an opening to that sewer, to that underground that is both linguistic and actual. When it comes to humanity, what we say often sign-posts where we are inside – and most of us are knee-deep in everyone else's crap… and our own.

Bleak? Yeah.

But here's the challenge I feel as a writer: to wade into the muck of human lives and show my readers that there is more to this underground than they may think. This sewer is my writer's foxhole. And it is here where Calvin Seerveld, in *Rainbows for a Fallen World*, has taught me to pray Psalm 19, which reminds me that *all* creation is God's burning bush. If that is true, then I believe a well-crafted story that makes its characters fully human can flare such a light in a reader's imagination. But sometimes, to make a character fully human, true to life, I need to let that character say the words she would actually utter. I would even argue that using those words – striving for authenticity – is part of what makes up the flint of the world, against which I strike my stories.

That, however, is a grand claim in need of defense.

In *This Ramshackle Tabernacle*, I try, through connected stories, to get inside human lives using whatever linguistic crawlspaces are available – including the F-bomb. And I endeavour, once inside a life or story, to let the characters speak for themselves. This means wading with them through a lot of crap. But it also means following them as they search in their own ways "to achieve a saving grace," as Hugh Cook has said of the collection. This search, for me, is the spark of the story.

Sometimes this is seen as wrestling with God, cursing him, questioning, even fantasizing about him. Sometimes it flashes when a young boy like Doug in "The Hammer" finds the strength to stand-up to his abusive father, or when an old man like Dick in "Crafty Old Dragon" works through a 40-year silence to say a first apology to his nagging wife Vicky.

Sometimes this spark is the light needed to figure out how *in* hell to write about something *other* than hell – something the young writer Bill Smithwick struggles with at the close of the collection.

And that is sometimes the hardest thing to do in reading dark stories: to hear a story's foul language, to be offended, yet to try, *through* that very language, to enter into the lives of characters who are what Terry Eagleton calls the "the scum of the earth." Jesus called them "the least of these" – the *anawim*. Literary critics sometimes call such a character "the other" – the other who is not me, who is nothing like me. When I see these *others* in stories – reprobates, losers, and screw-ups – as the *anawim* for whom Jesus told me to care, then reading about them becomes a way of loving them, and, by extension, learning to love their counterparts in the real world.

The test of a good story, for me, is whether it can make me care for someone who is seen as the scum of the earth. This is why I love David Adams Richards' novels: because they present characters' lives that seem to have no value, yet, by writing about these lives, Richards insists that they do have value – that each character, regardless of how worthless they seem, has inherent, God-given worth as a human being. In all of Richards' novels you feel, as a reader, that he loves every single one of his characters – the down-and-outs, the drunks, the prostitutes and even the uppity intellectuals who believe they are better than everyone else.

In Richards' novels each character is fully human – they curse, backstab, and bicker. But each character's life is a flare of human vitality in an otherwise dark world.

The holy in the carnal

As a writer, I am interested in this flame in the dark, which is, for me, finding the holy in the carnal. This is my intention. But I don't want to use it as an easy defense against questions people might have about the stories I write.

I have had readers – who are genuinely trying to understand my work – ask if it is possible to see and acknowledge filth, in language and in life, without getting dirty ourselves. This is a good question: one that I take seriously. Readers who ask this often do not want to reject a book that has raw language – say that it has no value – but they genuinely struggle with the tension they feel between reading fiction like that and being Christ-like: being "shrewd as snakes" in knowing that these things are done, that these words are used, but also being "innocent as doves" by not taking part in these things (Matthew 10:16).

We are all responsible for the words we use. Writers are no exception.

So, why do I use raw language to tell my stories?

It comes, for me, out of trying to *listen* to the voices of others – being shrewd, paying attention to everything, whether or not I like the sound of it or would say it myself. In contrast to what some may think (that I use the language I do to appeal to a broader readership), I often write what I do to put off a reader: like putting up signs – *Rough Road Ahead.*

I want the language to bother people.

But this means I have a double responsibility: to those I write about *and* to my readers. Attending to the first without forgetting the second, is difficult. Which is why humour intersperses the darker stories and why there are characters like Dan Roblin, Annie, Chizim, and even Bill Smithwick who act as Virgil-like guides to the reader: people who seem more able to be both serpent-like (shrewd) and dove-like (compassionate).

It may be a cop-out to say not all stories are for all readers. Just like not everyone can handle being a social worker or corrections officer. But there are those called to those vocations. They deal with a lot of dirt-bags but what the good ones "see" is not the filth of humanity but fallen humans struggling to get clean. My goal is to write about these kinds of people and to show, through stories, what it means to see their faces as made in the image of God and, therefore, worthy of a reader's love and compassion.

So, back to the question: Can we acknowledge the dirt without getting dirty ourselves? Honestly, I don't think so. Books affect us in deep enough ways that often we take on the things experienced in a story as our own. This is true for me. When I read I am often wounded by a book, but, strangely, I also feel more able to love because of the characters I have come to care for – even the reprobate ones. This has been my experience as a reader anyway. And, as an author, even though I write about things in our ramshackle world (abuse, violence, alienation), I am also writing about what makes our lives holy (love, redemption, perseverance). And, indirectly, I am writing about the Giver of those holy gifts who tabernacles with us.

I can only hope my readers glimpse that incarnate God in my love for each of my characters without being blinded by my use of the F-word.

Samuel Thomas Martin is the author of This Ramshackle Tabernacle, which was shorlisted for the 2010 BMO Winterset Award. His new novel Ash and Hoarforst *will be released in 2012 by Breakwater Books. Sam lives in St. John's, Newfoundland, runs the arts and literary blog Dark Art Cafe (samuelthomasmartin.wordpress.com), and is finishing up a PhD in English Literature.*

Bridging communities: *CC* interviews Belinda Lanning

CC interviews Belinda Lanning, an American Sign Language/English Interpreter and a Christian, who works for Sign Language Interpreting Associates, Ottawa. Her services are primarily contracted by the Canadian federal government, and she also contracts with other agencies in Ontario such as the Canadian Hearing Society.

Belinda signing at Jayden's baptism.

What's your daily work day like?

Every day is different. The federal government, as part of its employment equity program, provides interpretation services when requested by its employees, so I could be asked to interpret a job interview, a staff meeting, or a conference. In the community, I may be called upon to interpret in a medical setting such as a doctor's office or emergency room, in mental health settings, for example, ongoing counselling sessions, or in legal settings that could include law enforcement or court appearances.

What personality characteristics do you need to be a successful sign language interpreter?

You need to be a strong communicator and have a gift for languages. You need to be flexible and adaptive because your environment changes constantly. A diplomatic attitude is critical because as a sign language interpreter you provide a bridge from a minority cultural group – the Deaf community – to the majority community – those who hear. You also need objectivity. You have to be able to suppress your own personality and opinions to achieve impartiality in interpretation. Of course, your very presence as an interpreter automatically impacts the social dynamics, but your responsibility is to stay as neutral as possible. Lastly, because ASL is a visual language, you can't be shy or body-conscious because facial expressions and body movement are integral components of the language.

Quick processing and strong memory skills are crucial. You have to make judgments as you sign to indicate the tone, nuance and intent of the discourse. Sometimes the Deaf person has a high level of sophistication and expertise in his or her field, such as computer technology, for example, and you, as an interpreter, have a more limited understanding of the topic. Interpretation can be tricky in that regard, but training and experience aid in developing the skills to work in a variety of settings.

I'm often told that I have a graceful interpreting style. While some dramatic flair can be a bonus in delivery, if warranted, it's the hearing community that's attracted to the aesthetics of sign language. To the Deaf, accuracy is far more critical. There are interpreters who might appear less dramatic or graceful, but who are technically highly-skilled communicators.

It sounds like this might be a challenging occupation for a Christian.

It could be. You need to have a well thought-out Christian perspective so you are prepared to face conflicts that could arise between your personal beliefs and the situation. I do have the freedom to decline an assignment in advance. So, for example, I personally would not accept an interpreting assignment at a pro-choice rally, where I may be able to be neutral in my interpretation, but my mere presence might be misconstrued by others as endorsement of values I believe are unbiblical.

Once I accept an assignment, I have an obligation to interpret accurately and without bias, so if someone is swearing, taking God's name in vain, or raging, I have to represent that truthfully. The interpreter has a tremendous amount of power to misconstrue dialogue and such power cannot be abused. Injecting yourself and your own values into a conversation that is not really "yours" is the greater evil in those situations.

Moreover, by interpreting with integrity, I can be a positive example of Christ-like respect for an individual. Also, I can't assume that others in the situation are not Christians as well. If I were to modify my interpretation in hopes of honouring God, I could be taking away another person's opportunity to speak up, address the comment, or be a witness.

How did you get interested in pursuing this career?

I had no prior relationship with the Deaf community, which is somewhat unusual. As a teenager, I was motivated by a strong sense of justice and a desire to advocate for those who were marginalized, but I was lost, unsure of what to do with my life. I read about sign language in a college/university options book, thought it sounded interesting, and enrolled in a sign language communicator program. I followed up later with the ASL/English Interpreter program at St. Clair College in Windsor. I jumped in with both feet and not a clue about what God had in store for me.

Looking back, I see God's hand directing my life into this path. As it turns out, I have a gift for interpreting and love what I do. My husband and I eventually adopted a daughter, Jayden, who turned out to be Deaf. In fact, her name means "God has heard," a name we chose before we were even aware of her deafness. So we are very much convicted about God's providential care for our family. Thanks to his intervening grace, I was already able to communicate fluently with our little girl. ASL was her first language. Jayden has since received cochlear implants, a procedure not supported by some Deaf community activists. It was a difficult choice, given our admiration for the Deaf community, but for us, it has meant she can have access to both 'worlds'– hearing and Deaf. We love that Jayden has many choices and opportunities available to her. She's doing great and we look forward to what God has in store for the rest of her life.

Please share some of the underlining principles of "sign language."

American Sign Language is not universal. There are various sign languages used throughout the world. There are probably as many variations of signed language as there are spoken languages. In any culture, the Deaf will have a signed language. In Canada, the two predominant sign languages are: American Sign Language and French Sign Language. British Sign Language is a two-handed system and not at all similar to ASL which uses a single-handed fingerspelling system.

Although ASL is sometimes viewed as inferior to English or perceived as a useful "tool" for communication with developmentally-disabled or autistic individuals, it's important for the hearing community to understand that it is a genuine language. The National Association of the Deaf states: "… ASL conforms to linguistic principles (e.g., semantics, syntax, morphology, phonology, and pragmatics). The complex visual-spatial linguistic structure of ASL is distinct from English, a linear, sequential language based on auditory processes." Certain mouth movements are a component of ASL, but lip-reading is not. Lip-reading can be a tool for communication, but it is very difficult to learn.

Thus, there is a critical difference between the ability to "sign" and to "interpret." As a language, ASL is capable of conveying the highest levels of complex thought, including theological concepts like sanctification or atonement. Because ASL is visually-based, it expresses some spiritual concepts even more beautifully than English. I find the concept of heaven, for example, far richer and grander in ASL. *Christian Courier* readers might like to check out **deafmissions.com** to see Bible verses interpreted by Deaf people for whom signing is a first language. It's a moving experience to "see" the gospel.

Lastly, while it can take longer in ASL to convey description than in English because of its visual nature, other statements that require several words or phrases in English might take only one or two signs to convey in ASL. Further evidence that these are two distinct languages.

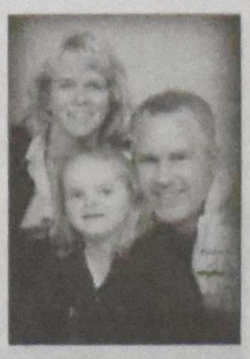
What advice do you have for us as a hearing community about interacting with the Deaf community?

One thing to note immediately is that the culturally Deaf community dislikes the phrase "hearing-impaired." The Deaf community distinguishes itself from those who have hearing loss due to age or accident. Many adults who were born deaf prefer to simply be identified as 'Deaf' (with a capital 'D'). They view themselves as an oppressed cultural minority. Because they use sign language the majority of the time and interpreters are somewhat of a luxury, they face continual obstacles in society, primarily in terms of accessibility. Many in the Deaf community do not want to be labelled as having a disability at all. They view themselves as completely competent, as indeed, they are. Their challenges are more often related to access rather than an inability to hear.

I think it's important to make accommodations for the Deaf and for those who struggle with hearing loss. The hearing community can easily forget or overlook those who need that extra measure of attentiveness for adequate and beneficial communication. I advocate for my daughter's needs within group settings such as Sunday school, and seek to be an example of that kind of bridging not only "on the job," but in all aspects of Christian life.

The Christian hearing community would do well to consider their local Deaf community and how they can accommodate and enfold them into their congregations. Get to know the Deaf people in your community. Pull out paper and a pen and start communicating. Then, take a sign language class, visit a Deaf congregation, and consider how to make your church more accessible such as providing written versions of the sermon or hiring an interpreter for your services.

Thank you, Belinda, for sharing your life with us, informing us about ASL and helping us understand some of the complexities in relating to the Deaf community. We wish you God's continued blessings on your work and family.



Belinda, Steve and Jayden Lanning live in Ottawa, Ontario, and attend Barrhaven Fellowship Christian Reformed Church.

For more information on interpreting:

AVLIC Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada: **avlic.ca**

For more information on the Deaf community:

CAD Canadian Association of the Deaf: www.cad.ca

CCSD Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf: **deafculturecentre.ca**

Written with a living language

Christopher Keefer

Language and technology. It is not news that these are the elements which define us, separate us from the animal kingdom. To Adam alone was brought the creatures of the earth, to provide for each a name[1], and we are tool users and inventors – homo faber, man the maker, the dim reflection in us of the maker of heaven and earth.

What is news is one defining the other. Especially common are missives on the supposed ruination of the English language, by the changes communications technologies like IRC chat, Facebook walls, Twitter feeds and the like have spawned – l33t sp34k (leet speak) and texting short-forms being amongst the results.

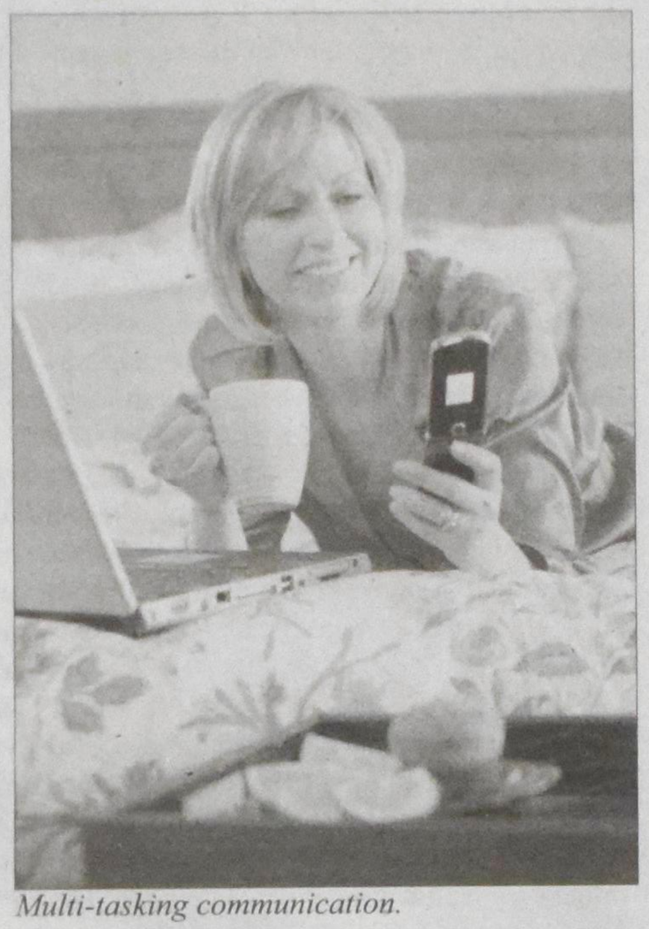
New technology inevitably affects the way we interact with one another and the world around us. Electric lights have obliged many of us to rise for work before the sun has, and go to sleep long after it has set. The kind of work we're doing has changed – robotics increasingly obsoletes the assembly line worker, and computers increasingly empower the office cubicle. The necessity of physical closeness has decreased as e-mail, chat programs and social networks bridge ever-widening gaps. We define technology, and in turn it defines us.

What does this have to do with language? Well, if we can accept that technology can change the way we live and work, should we be surprised that it can affect the way we speak and write as well? Moreover, should we fear this influence any more than we do the changes effected by electric lights? The uproar over the supposed ruination of English by such things as leet speak and texting short-forms is, I suspect, a symptom of a lack of knowledge – regarding the origins of these influences, their current usage and their implications, and regarding the nature and origin of the English language itself. Thus, we would be well-served to consider both in determining whether or not the language is truly under threat.

Leet speak – replacing letters with numbers

First, what is up with replacing letters with numbers anyways? Doesn't that simply obscure their intended meaning? Let us define the origins of leet speak, and then consider the question.

Generation next.



Multi-tasking communication.

The genesis of leet is likely to be found in BBSs (Bulletin Board Services), the precursor to the World Wide Web[2]. On each bulletin board there would be a place for messages which was often filtered, not just for profanity, but to disallow certain topics, such as hacking techniques. In order to get around these text filters, users of the BBS would replace certain letters with numbers or symbols – thus, "A Phone Phreaking Tutorial" would become "4 ph0n3 phr34k1ng T|_|t0r14l". Outlandish at first glance, it has its own vaguely defined structure which becomes clear with a little study. 4 is equal to a, 3 is equal to e, and so on.

So, considering its origins, does it still obscure meaning? Quite the opposite, actually, in that leet has become a pidgin. A pidgin is a simplified syntax and vocabulary for use between those without a shared language – for instance, if you were to speak only Dutch, and I were to speak only English, but we had a few simple words, not in either language, which we could use to express things to one another, that would be the beginning of a pidgin. In the same way that English is increasingly the language of business (and, centuries before, French was the language of court diplomacy), leet fills in the gap between English speakers and non-English speakers in chat-rooms and internet forums[3]. Without leet, an exchange of ideas wouldn't be possible between speakers of languages as disparate as English, Russian and Hindi.

An example of technology shaping language, yes – an example of the ruination of English, no. Rather, it is a beneficial extension of it, absorbing new words from various other languages into its loose lexicon, and eventually filtering them back into the language proper[4] – and, as we shall see shortly, absorbing new words into the language is exactly what English has been all about for some time.

Texting: snippets of life

What about texting short-forms, then? These too have a technological root. The SMS (Short Messaging Service) protocol, which all cellphone services use for text messaging, limits the sender to roughly 140 –160 characters[5]. You could send a style guide correct set of sentences via multiple text messages – but since users are often charged per message, compressing as much meaning as possible into as minimal a space as possible is the rule. Thus does "please come over tonight" become "pls cum ovr 2nite". Twitter, a popular tool for sharing snippets of your life, was designed with SMS in mind, and thus has the same 140 character limit, and encourages the same sort of short-forms to squeeze meaning into place. Is this an example of the ruination of the English language? Certainly, it doesn't encourage strict adherence to traditional spelling and grammar – but just how important is traditional spelling and grammar to the real purpose of language – communicating meaning?

English: a mongrel language

Here is the heart of the matter. What is English for, and where did it come from? The former is tied to the latter, and cannot be easily answered – English as we know it is a mongrel, the child of many parents. Old Saxon, Anglo-Frisian, Anglo-Norman, all played their part, as did Latin and cross-pollination with its descendants, the romance languages such as French and Spanish[6]. The point is that English has gone through many transformations through the ages, but at its time, the purpose was always to communicate meaning most effectively from one speaker (or writer) to another. This is easily illustrated. Pick up a copy of Beowulf, not updated to modern language, but in its original Old English.

"Hwæt! We Gardena in geardagum, þeodcyninga, þrym gefrunon, hu ða æþelingas ellen fremedon."

Doesn't look much like the English we know and love, does it? But it served its purpose at the time – in fact, it is considered a poetic masterpiece. Now take a look at *The Canterbury Tales*, the go-to example of Middle English.

"Wepyng and waylyng, care and oother sorwe, I knowe ynogh, on even and a-morwe."

Some sense can be plucked from its midst, but only with difficulty – the spelling and usage is inconsistent with English as we know it, which didn't prevent it from communicating meaning. Finally, consider Shakespeare. Anyone who's had a western education has enjoyed (or perhaps only endured) the chance to read a play or two by the bard. Many find it a difficult task, because of the unfamiliarity of its language – but Shakespeare is considered modern English! If the language can change so much between the centuries and still be considered only superficially altered, how long and varied has been English's journey in reaching its current form! And indeed, how much farther might it still have to go?

Fear not

When the near-hysterical articles on the impending ruination of English are aired, they are essentially harping on a much deeper, more fundamental fear – fear of change, fear of the unknown before us in the opaque mists of the future. But languages change as they are used, and as they interact with other languages and peoples, always striving towards the most effective form for communicating meaning. The only unchanging languages are the dead ones – Latin is the same as it ever was, but only the historians care. Attempting to freeze out the changes that technology is making to our language would be only a nail in its coffin. Some other language would fill in the gap where English was no longer an effective medium of communication, and English would fade from primacy or even interest. Those who most fear the ruination of English are the ones who would kill it.

Let me leave you with a consideration of that most meaningful application of the English language – the translation of the Bible. The NIV translation of the Bible, which was first released in 1978 and updated in 1984 , underwent another revision in 2011 in order to "reflect changes in English usage", amongst other things. Thirty or so years, and the translation of the Bible needs to be updated. The language is alive and dynamic, and the word of God no less so – should we not be likewise?

Footnotes

[1] "So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals." Genesis 2:20, NIV 2011.

[2] Mitchell, Anthony (2006-06-12). "A Leet Primer". Technology News. ECT News Network, Inc. Retrieved April 23, 2011.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

[5] 3GPP TS 23.038, Alphabets and language-specific information. http://www.3gpp.org/ftp/Specs/html-info/23038.htm. Retrieved April 23, 2011.

[6] EnglishClub.com, History of the English Language. http://www.englishclub.com/english-language-history.htm. Retrieved April 23, 2011.

Resources for more information:

A Leet Primer: **technewsworld.com/story/47607.html** (An introduction to L33t, its origins and its beneficial character).

The Jargon File: **catb.org/jargon/html/** (A collection of hacker jargon, terms and usage, compiled by the community that birthed it).

Christopher Keefer is a writer and computer programmer currently working in Toronto. He can be reached at keefer@sanemethod.com, or at his website at ***sanemethod.com.***

Our son has dyslexia

Brenda Visser

Here I am, a writer, a lover of words and books. Learning to read came easily to me. Spelling, I aced. And in creative writing assignments in high school, I shone. I earned a BA in English and Elementary Education. One of my favourite courses was "Teaching Reading," a senior level course in which I earned an A.

It may sound as if I am bragging, but I am telling you this so that you may see how God perfectly prepared me to be the mother of a dyslexic child.

Ironic? Yes. Do I wish it were different? At times. Would I trade him in for another child? Never. My relationship with my son, is strong. Not perfect, sometimes frustrating, but made to last. God designed it so.

The Learning Disabilities Association of Canada describes a learning disability as a neurological condition that interferes with a person's ability to store, process, or produce information. **Dyslexia** is a specific learning disability that affects language. Commonly misunderstood to be a condition that causes letters to appear backwards and upside down, dyslexia is in reality much more complicated. It is now thought to be a problem with the sounds in words (phonological awareness). A learning disability affects all aspects of a person's life.

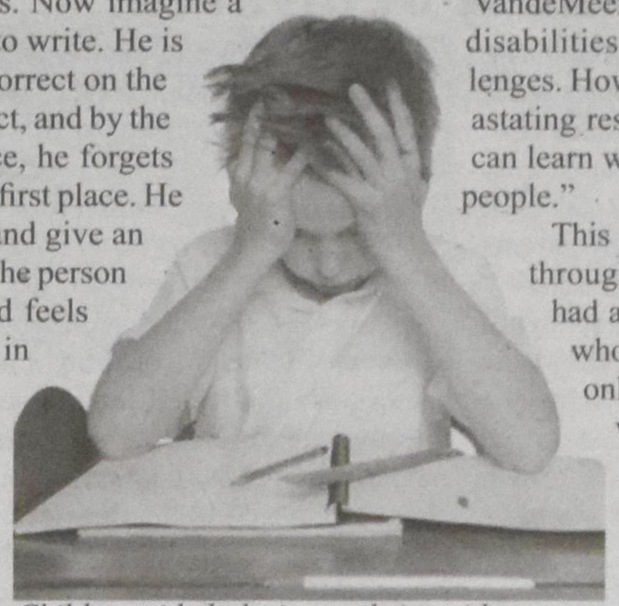
My journey with dyslexia began many years ago when our son was very small. Healthy, alert, and cute in every way, our son was delayed in his speech. But he was not lacking in intelligence and readily engaged in the world around him. He knew animal sounds long before he could name them. We would point to a picture of a cow, and he'd say, "Moo!" To a cat, and he'd say, "Meow!" Perhaps this was not unusual, but this seemed to stick with me – I was beginning to see he was wired in a different way.

Something awry

Before our son reached kindergarten age, my husband and I knew that something was a little awry. He wasn't learning his letters and numbers, yet he was bright. By grade two, he was just beginning to grasp the correct formation and order of letters. Unfortunately, between kindergarten and grade two, our family experienced two long-distance moves and three schools. Our son was tested for and diagnosed with dyslexia in grade two; by now the learning disability was very evident, and we were not surprised. We had a fantastic teacher at this time, and she helped him make good gains. He has made steady progress through all the grades since, thanks to very supportive teachers. He loves to learn.

Unfortunately, most children (and adults) with a learning disability are also more prone to anxiety and depression. They *know* they are not learning like others; they *know* certain tasks take them longer; they *know* that they are equally or more intelligent than their peers, yet they struggle.

Imagine a class taking a test in the conventional way. Everyone must be quiet. The only sound is the shuffling of papers and the scratching of pencils. Now imagine a child who has dyslexia who struggles to write. He is anxious about whether the letters are correct on the page, about whether spellings are correct, and by the time he gets to the end of one sentence, he forgets what he was going to write about in the first place. He is trying his hardest to do a good job, and give an account of what he knows. Meanwhile the person beside him is done. The dyslexic child feels very stressed, and can easily give up in the face of such a daunting challenge. He might even know the material well, and fail the test miserably. If he had been asked the questions orally, he would have been able to give long, detailed answers, perhaps beyond what a peer would. These kids have average or above average intelligence, face many challenges, and become anxious when what is expected of them is unattainable. For dyslexics, this area of language - its symbols and sounds - is where they get stuck.



Children with dyslexia can thrive with support.

In the *Journal for Learning Disabilities,* an article entitled "The Mental Health of Canadians With Self-Reported Learning Disabilities" (*Vol. 42, No. 1, 24-40 (2009)*) reported that people with learning disabilities were "...more than twice as likely to report high levels of distress, depression, anxiety disorders, suicidal thoughts." This is a very sobering reality for parents of a dyslexic to hear, and yet we are not surprised. We too have seen this tendency in our son, which is directly related to his success level in school.

So what are parents to do? Is there any hope? Yes! While the learning disability is a life-long challenge just as diabetes would be, it is not the end of the story. With emotional and educational support, kids with dyslexia can have good success.

Diane VandeMeent is an educational therapist with the National Institute for Learning Development, an emerging Canadian organization dedicated to training educators to work with children and adults with learning difficulties through an individualized program of educational therapy. She has been working with children in lower grades for over 10 years, and is convinced that early intervention is the best way to prevent school failure and self esteem issues. Beginning with screening in kindergarten, children are evaluated for indicators of dyslexic tendencies. By the age of 8, formal assessment can begin. VandeMeent says, "Once they [dyslexic children] are identified, and appropriate help is given, I have seen significant improvements." Most dyslexic children need a combination of educational therapy and a modified program in school that would include shorter written work, and more oral, tactile, and visual opportunities for learning. Computer programs and art therapy can also help make a profound difference. Emotional support for these kids is also vital.

VandeMeent concludes, "I believe learning disabilities and dyslexia are lifelong challenges. However, through mediation, the devastating results can be lessened and children can learn ways to be independent, successful people."

This is our prayer for our son, too, that, through the network of support he has had around him, he will become a man who is confident and successful. Not only did God perfectly prepare me for working with our son; he continues to use what I know about dyslexia to reach those beyond my own family. A few years ago, I was working in an office and one of the employees wrote a note on his time card. It immediately screamed to me, "Dyslexia!" It was written in mixed capitals and lowercase letters, had misspellings, and the print was wobbly, like the person had been writing slowly. I was able to go to my boss and point out that I thought this employee had a learning disability. This was an eye-opener, and explained why this person was making frequent mistakes with invoices and driving instructions. He had difficulty reading!

I feel a lot of compassion for this man, who has been frequently misunderstood because of his learning disability. He lost a well-paying job because of it, and has had numerous painful experiences in his life. He did not get the early intervention that could have been so beneficial. I believe there are many adults that go through life in a similar way, and it is so tragic when there is help available. I am glad that God used me to intervene in this man's life in a small way.

We have seen our son grow and mature, learning a lot about the world around him, and about himself. We thank God for this. We thank God for loving teachers. We thank God for providing me, his mother, with the knowledge and skills to be his tutor. Most of all, we pray that our son will always see himself as a special, one-of-a-kind child of God. Our son is a gift, and we thank God for him.

Brenda Visser (brenda.visser@ripnet.com), mother of four and wife of one, lives in Athens, Ontario. To read a blog post about one of her experiences with dyslexia, go to **brendavisser.wordpress.com** *and search for "My Favourite Christmas Card."*

Brenda lines up with her family on the porch.

If someone you know struggles with reading, maybe you can help. Here are some resources to get you started:

Websites

The Learning Disabilities Association of Canada **ldac-acta.ca**

The National Institute for Learning Development Canada **nildcanada.org**

Books

The Gift of Dyslexia by Ronald D. Davis and Eldon M. Braun

Overcoming Dyslexia by Sally Shawitz

Your local library or bookstore can also provide you with many other titles.

Be an emotional support for those-struggling with reading. They need to talk about this with someone. As with any struggles in life that we face, it is better share our burdens. Since you have read to the end of this, you are a capable reader, and you can reach out to those who need help. You can make a difference!

Columns

Toddlers to Teens

Denise Dykstra

The quiet victims of divorce

It's the chicken-and-egg question many couples wrestle with: Is it better for children to live with unhappily married parents? Or is it better to have happy parents who are no longer married to each other?

More and more moms and dads are agonizing over this decision. Should they stay together for the kids? If they do, will they be subjecting the family to years of tension and stress? Or is that just an excuse to make them feel okay about not working on the marriage for the sake of their children?

According to the Institute of Marriage and Family Canada, first marriages in our country have a mere 67 percent chance of lasting a lifetime. That means an awful lot of Canadian couples have to decide if they want their kids to come from a broken home, or live in one.

Recently the parents of a good friend of our daughter Jamie split up. Megan[1] told Jamie she was relieved. She was glad the fighting stopped. That's the most common explanation I've heard for why couples choose not to stay together when they have children. They worry that a miserable marriage makes for a miserable home life. They don't want their kids to suffer from the conflict, nor do they want their kids to learn bad habits from it.

But is the flip side any better?

Many psychologists believe the divorce process itself is far more traumatic than the problems that lead up to it. During and after a divorce, kids face unstable living conditions and times of separation from their parents, as well as feelings of guilt, fear and confusion. In addition, studies show that children from divorced families are prone to having more difficulty in school, more behaviour problems, more problems with peers and more trouble getting along with their parents (Amato, 2001; Amato & Keith, 1991).

And that's just the tip of the iceberg. Research has also revealed that children of divorced parents are more frequently involved in crime and drug abuse, and have higher drop-out and suicide rates. Plus they're 50 percent more likely to get a divorce themselves than are kids from an intact home.

Every marriage is a fixer-upper

Furthermore, there's no guarantee that parents will be happy once they're no longer married. Divorce is a major life change that can leave a person reeling. Money often becomes a problem and single parenting overwhelms. Homes may need to be sold and careers changed. And through it all, spouses – though they are exes[2] still need to deal with each other. And children are still in the middle of that conflict.

Marriage isn't a human invention; it's a God-created institution. And children raised within a marriage are blessed. So yes, parents should stay together for the sake of the kids[2]. If parents concentrate harder on working out conflicts than working on their own personal happiness, kids will be better off.

It won't be easy for parents – and that's an understatement. Repairing a marriage is a messy, complicated, emotionally draining process. Parents will have to dig deep – possibly for a very long time. But if they chose to have children, they owe it to those children to endure all the pain, discomfort, anger and frustration it takes to improve their relationship.

Let your kids see healthy conflict resolution, not disintegration.

Thankfully, partners working through marital problems have a couple of things going for them. The first: time. Parents willing to make a whole-hearted attempt to save their marriage don't have to do so in a few weeks or a couple of months. They have years to learn how to work through their differences, communicate better, problem-solve the challenges in their relationship and rediscover what made them love each other in the first place. And though the kids will have to live through conflict, they'll also get to live through – and learn through – resolution.

Parents working towards a happy marriage also have God's grace on their side. Our creator doesn't want sin to break down marriages. He wants nothing to separate what he has joined together (Matt. 19:6). And our God is powerful. With our cooperation, he can transform even the hardest of hearts. He can resolve even the greatest of marital problems. He can take a couple on the brink of divorce and make them happier than they ever dreamed they could be – happier than the day they walked down the aisle.

Believe it. For the sake of the kids.

[1]not her real name.

[2]with the exception, of course, of abusive relationships.

Denise Dykstra (dykstras@telus.net) lives in Edmonton, Alberta. She's a writer and mother of five.

Artful Eye

Doodles submitted by Cathy Smith from the cover of her daughter's catechism book, Never On Your Own, *circa 1994.*

Resisting Geometry

The first time I saw my father defeated
he was leaving the only parent-teacher conference
he ever had concerning my academic failure,
his black raincoat drooping over one arm.
Settling his other arm over my shoulder,
he walked me to the car, told me about
his sixth-grade failure to master fractions.

How could I explain to him
it was the axioms themselves
I objected to, knowing that, like his whims,
I had to take them on faith.
Tested against experience
they appeared to be correct –
no two points could occupy the same space
at the same time; lines perfectly parallel
will never intersect; a staight line
is the shortest distance between two points.
But such self-evidence troubled me.

Imagining exceptions, I felt called
to test the axioms, to wage a battle
against givens, resisting at the root.
When the boy circled Mr. Oelkers
at the blackboard, arguing logic,
I sat at the back of the room
drawing shapes that defied these laws.

It was only in the spring, sprawled out
in front of the stereo, listening to James Taylor
and embroidering the margins of my geometry book
with blue ball-point pen, that I discovered
what was at stake for me was the axiomatic quality
of reasoning itself, the ways in which our assumptions
construct reality, become paradigms
that organize our vision.

I realized that no one else took geometry
as seriously as I did – at least no one
who was failing, that is – and that
in order to get on with life
I would have to get beyond axioms,
memorize theorems, prove hypotheses.

This was not art, where my doodles
might have some eccentric meaning.
This was a game with rules
and if I put aside my distrust of logic
long enough, I could learn to play.
But there was no longer time
to be good at it, only time to garner
a hard-won D.

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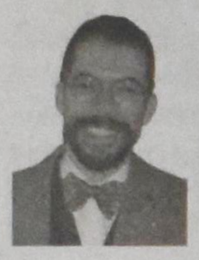
Ann Hostetler is an English professor at Goshen College in Indiana and is the author of a volume of poetry, Empty Room with Light *(DreamSeeker Books, 2002). Her work has won numerous awards and has appeared in a wide variety of publications. Check out her website at* ***www2.goshen.edu/~anneh/***

Columns

Principalities & Powers

David Koyzis

Dialects still classify the speaker



Several years ago one of my colleagues pointed out that I was the only one he knew who pronounced the "h" in words such as *where*, *whether*, and *why,* which he suspected was an affectation. As I have lived in a number of places in North America and tend to be something of a linguistic chameleon, I couldn't say for certain whether he was correct. But a little research revealed that in some parts of our continent *when* is pronounced as *wen* and in others as *when*. Where I grew up, people tend to pronounce it the latter way. In fact, the only "wh" words in which I do not pronounce the "h" are *whoa* and *wharf*. So it definitely was not an affectation on my part.

In Europe, regional variations tend to take the form of dialects, which are very nearly distinct languages in their own right. Prof. Henry Higgins sings about these English dialects to comic effect in *My Fair Lady*: "Why Can't the English [Learn to Speak]?" Indeed, it is not always easy for someone from Yorkshire to understand someone from Cornwall and vice versa, unless they consciously imitate the standard "Oxbridge" variety of English. Similarly, a speaker of *Schwyzerdütsch*, the Swiss-German dialect, might have difficulty comprehending a speaker of *Plattdeutsch*, or Low German. Among Greek-speakers, the Cypriot dialect stands out for being somewhat more archaic than standard demotic Greek.

In North America, by contrast, the variations in English tend to take the form of mere accents, with minor differences in vocabulary. These accents are most pronounced on the east coast, whose settlement preceded the era of mass communication and transportation. Here there are slight differences in speech patterns between towns and cities. The Brooklyn accent may be the most famous, as spoken by the 1970s television character, Archie Bunker. As one moves west, the variations become more broadly regional than local.

I grew up speaking a kind of standard mid-western American English, the sort disseminated by network news anchors. Yet several years ago I was talking with an acquaintance, who, as it turns out, grew up not two blocks from where I did in suburban Chicago and even attended my elementary school. Much to my surprise, to my ears he had an accent. I can no longer recall whether I ever spoke as he did.

Verbal class distinctions

Complicating all this is the fact that, in many languages, a particular dialect or accent comes to be seen as proper or even prestigious, as noted in the Henry Higgins song. The English spoken by the BBC announcer has tremendous snob appeal in Great Britain, and even in North America. This is, of course, the so-called *King*'s English. The same colleague I mentioned above has often said that a language is a dialect with an army and a navy. In other words, standardized languages depend on a centralized political authority capable of imposing them on everyone else in the country. If a Northumbrian ruler had succeeded in uniting England more than a thousand years ago, the Yorkshire dialect might well have become the prestigious language, as odd as that might seem to us now.

In the United States, the southern accent generally lacks snob appeal, unless it is a "cultivated" one from cities such as Charleston or Atlanta. Furthermore, the distinctive black or African-American version of this often becomes a verbal handicap to those phoning for hotel reservations or seeking employment. That this is unfair does not alter the fact that one's speech, including one's accent, inevitably affects the way others perceive one. My own great-grandmother

Eliza improves her accent to become My Fair Lady.

reportedly spoke with the inflections of her Appalachian homeland all her life. In fact, my mother told me that she pronounced the neuter third-person-singular pronoun as "hit," a holdover from Middle English, and even Anglo-Saxon, with an obvious family resemblance to the Dutch *het*.

If the language of the king once became the standard language of a country through the extension of a uniform administrative apparatus throughout his realm, it may be that nowadays the electronic media are effectively homogenizing our languages. The Brooklyn accent seems to be dying. Even my mother-in-law, who was born there, has lost it over the decades. Nonstandard dialects in Europe are similarly threatened, although one sees efforts here and there to protect them and even, where they have died out, to revive them.

Consequently, my colleague's aphorism about the army and navy may be obsolete. It might now be said that a language is a dialect with radio and television networks. In this case, perhaps our political leaders are now taking their cues, as in so many other areas, from the media and not the other way round. Whether (not *wether*) this is ultimately for the good remains to be seen.

David T. Koyzis has taught political science at Redeemer University College, Ancaster, Ontario, for nearly a quarter century, and is the author of Political Visions and Illusions.

Intangible Things

Heidi Vander Slikke

Fun mit Englisch

When my parents arrived in Canada in the 1950s, they faced the same challenges as most other European immigrants: a different culture, an unfriendly climate and – perhaps most daunting of all – a whole new language. They soon realized the importance of learning English.

The Red Lake Mining Company sponsored my father to work in the gold mines in northern Ontario. He saved up enough money to bring my mother and brother over a year later. I was born a couple of years after that.

Late one rainy afternoon as our family drove along a remote stretch of highway, a Canada goose flew against the windshield. Its foot caught under the wiper arm. The creature flapped and struggled and finally freed itself. In the meantime, my father lost sight of the road, drove into the ditch and flipped the car over.

No one was hurt, but my mother was pinned between her seat and the dashboard. Finally a police car came along and the officer radioed for help.

With everyone safe at last, the policeman drove us home and asked my father what had happened. Still shaken and with very limited English, Pa explained that a "*gose*" hit the windshield and he couldn't see. The officer understood that a "ghost" hit the car. Since my father wasn't drunk, he assumed Pa was trying to cover something up and charged him with careless driving.

When Pa appeared in court, the magistrate asked him, "Are we to believe that a ghost hit your car?"

"No, not a ghost," my father said, "A *gose*, a big *gose*!" And he began to flap his arms and make honking noises.

"Oh, you mean a goose," the judge said.

"*Jah.* Dat's what I said – a *gose*," said Pa. The judge laughed and dismissed the charge. Clearly my father's pronunciation needed work.

Language traps and treasures

But how does one master a language where a jumble of letters like "o-u-g-h" can have so many different sounds? Think about it: *off* as in cough; *uff* as in tough; *aw* as in ought; *ow* as in plough; or *oo* as in slough (which can also be pronounced *sluff,* by the way).

By what stretch of the imagination does "t-i-o-n" form the *shun* sound?

There are words where the meaning is changed by shifting the emphasis from one syllable to the next, words with multiple meanings and words spelled differently with different meanings that sound exactly the same. And let's not forget idioms, colloquialisms and figures of speech, just to make life interesting.

Why is it one goose and two geese, but one moose and no such thing as meese? You can have one mouse or several mice, but one house and no one has ever heard of hice.

Ma and Pa struggled with the fact that English has more exceptions than rules, so unlike their native tongue. (Germans love rules.) They worked at properly forming the "t-h" sound, which in German would have been considered a speech impediment. My mother turned it into a "z," while my father substituted "d." So I lived in a home filled with "zis und dat."

Far more amusing than my parents' English were my attempts at German. Who could keep all those genders straight for each and every noun? I couldn't roll my r's and when I tried to pronounce their "c-h" blend, it sounded like I had something nasty stuck in my throat.

My parents persevered. They took night classes, read the daily newspaper, and spoke mostly English to each other. Eventually they could work crossword puzzles and read books. Their language skills were good enough to check my homework every night. I never went to school with spelling mistakes. Along with a few memorable teachers, they inspired in me a love for rich, expressive language, good stories and fine poetry.

As a child I browsed the dictionary for fun, wore a path to the local library and spent my allowance on books of word puzzles and Reader's Digest. I entertained myself by learning new words and then finding ways to use them. To this day I have a shelf full of grammar books, various dictionaries and a thesaurus the size of a metro phonebook.

Along the way I met some influential Christians who helped me discover that language is one of God's marvellous gifts. Like flowers in a spectacular garden, he has created thousands of languages, some complex, some simple. All are intended for good purposes, although frequently abused. Almost as basic to my life as the breath I take, I admit I rarely stop to consider the beauty of language, or to give thanks for it. Maybe I have some work to do on my language skills as well.

Heidi Vander Slikke (hmvanderslikke@hotmail.com) lives in Harriston, Ontario.

Columns

The Public Square

Harry Antonides

Why freedom of speech is an endangered species

That is why for the Islamists freedom can exist only in a theocracy – where there is no freedom . . . And that is why they claim that the jihad against the West is not aggressive or threatening but rather a way of delivering freedom to the West.

(The World Turned Upside-down, Melanie Phillips, p.149).

The large-scale immigration of Muslims – some 30 million in Europe – to the free West has had a profound impact on the receiving countries. The main reason is Islam's radically different worldview, which baffles non-Muslims. This has come to a head in the concept of freedom as understood in the West and in the minds of Muslim believers.

Non-Muslims must reckon with the fact that true Muslims have a different view of the world. Words such as truth, honour, loyalty, good, evil, democracy, freedom and so on do not have the same meanings for Muslims as non-Muslims. Islam is much more than a religion; it's closer to a totalitarian political ideology that regulates every aspect of life. In other words, its goal is to establish a theocracy, not a democracy. By definition this means that there is no freedom of religion, or any other kind of freedom.

Islam is defined in the Koran as the final, perfect and unalterable revelation of God, given to Muhammad, along with the hadith and the sunna, which are the teachings and actions of Muhammad. These documents are seen as the authoritative rule for all of life, ranging from the most weighty to the trivial. To defy them is to defy God himself, and thus to be an infidel – a kafir destined for hell. Muslims who adhere to this radical version of Islam view democracy as a form of blasphemy because humans create their own law instead of obeying God's law. It's not just a difference of opinion but a clash of worldviews.

The large influx of Muslim immigrants into the West since WW II has coincided with the revival of radical Islam. This radicalization has been powerfully influenced by certain revered and influential Muslim scholars of the 18th and 20th century. If you want to understand Islam you have to study their leaders. Four of them stand out as being exceptionally influential, even now.

These include Muhammad ibn al- Wahhab (1703-1792); Sheik Hasan al-Banna (1906-1949), founder of the Muslim Brotherhood; Sayyad Cutb (1906-1966), who has been called the founding father of modern jihad; and Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi (1903-1979), who has been called "the greatest revivalist in Islam in the 20th century."

All four of them agreed that the rule of Islam must be established over the entire world. Sayyad Qutb tried very hard to prove that such a theocracy would not create a problem for non-Muslims. In a chapter in his book *Milestones*, "Jihad: the Cause of God," he argued that if Muslims establish their theocracy, everyone will voluntarily submit. So there is no problem with freedom. But first comes the elimination of "all those political and material powers which stand between people and Islam."

Stealth Jihad

Many in the West are oblivious to the fact that Islam can spread subtly in the West by influencing and infiltrating major institutions, especially education, the media and politics. This non-violent method promises to be much more effective than terrorism. It is a type of jihad that uses the openness and freedom of the West in order to destroy that freedom from within.

Yousef Qaradawi, a top Mulim Brotherhood imam, assured his audience in a 1995 speech at an Islamic conference in Ohio that victory shall come through *dawah* – Islamic renewal and outreach. He said: "We will conquer Europe, we will conquer America, not through the sword, but through *dawah.*"

Think of the case of Ezra Levant and Mark Steyn, charged four years ago with hate crimes by the Canadian Islamic establishment. Levant had provoked Muslim anger by publishing the Danish cartoons. Mohamed Elmasry, representing the Canadian Islamic Congress, accused Steyn of insulting Islam in his book *America Alone.* That time the complainants did not win. But even in losing, the Muslims won. They won because these so-called Human Rights proceedings themselves are an abomination.

Having done nothing wrong, Levant and Steyn, as well as *Maclean's*, were still punished by having to defend themselves at great cost in these Kafkaesque proceedings. These cases send a chilling message that will make many writers and editors of lesser fortitude remain well within the politically-correct boundaries. The enemies of freedom win,

Nonetheless, people such as Steyn and Levant deserve our respect. Freedom can disappear overnight with one sudden revolution. In our still-free West, it is dying by a thousand cuts. Do not allow this to go on.

Harry Antonides (hantonides@sympatico.ca) retired as director of the former Work Research Foundation. He lives in Willowdale, Ontario.

Country Living

Meindert Vander Galien

The view atop the mountain

For me, spectacular scenery is being on top of a mountain (or high ridge), looking down over a valley of flat agricultural land as far as the eye can see. When I'm overlooking such a valley, I sometimes imagine what Moses must have thought, standing on Mount Nebo and surveying the Promised Land that God was giving to the Israelites. Mount Nebo is an elevated ridge in what is now western Jordan. Moses could only see the land of Canaan from a distance; God did not allow him to enter. Instead, Joshua led the Israelites across the Jordan River to the land that God had promised them.

I'm a little disappointed with the view atop Mount Nebo today, from photos I've seen. You can see the northern shores of the Dead Sea, the Mount of Olives, the Jordan River and Jericho, which is on the opposite bank. But it's mostly dry desert and rocky hills that go on forever – no green landscape.

My wife and I live and farm in a valley that was once part of the Champlain Sea. From the Pinnacle, a rocky ridge near Renfrew, you overlook the flat clay valley with its 100-acre fields and the Bonnechere River that flows through it.

When you drive north of North Bay, Ontario to New Liskeard you see forest and rocks. There is no productive land. Drive for two hours and then suddenly the bush ends and you look down on a beautiful valley of flat land and modern farms. Thousands of years ago it was a sea. Now it's fertile agricultural land. It's quite a change of scenery as you descend into the valley that continues for hundreds of miles.

I've been in small agricultural valleys in mountainous countries like Switzerland and Norway. I photographed Simmental cattle in the small Simme-Valley of Switzerland – the original home of the breed. Stand on high plateaus, ridges or mountains in countries like Germany and France and you can also see breath-taking scenery – miles of green farmland. I saw beautiful flat green farmland from Vimy Ridge in France.

How green was my valley

But the best view I've ever seen of a huge agricultural valley is from the Tehachapi Mountains, north of Los Angeles in the San Joaquin Valley, central California. Interstate (highway) 5 winds through the mountains at Tejon Pass, the narrowest point. The pass has a mostly gradual rise from its southern approach, but there is a precipitous drop to the north, as you descend from an elevation of 4,100 feet.

After what seems like hours of mountainous terrain, signs announce that now you're going down. Transport trucks have to be in the right lane; the posted speed limit is 45 miles per hour. There are numerous runaway truck ramps in case of brake failure. It's a long and steep descent. Partway down the mountain, however, there's a little break in the trees and you can see the huge valley below. What a spectacular sight! Last October, on our descent, it was a clear day and my wife and I could see flat land all the way to the horizon.

The 225-mile-long San Joaquin Valley is one of the world's most fertile agricultural zones. There's nothing like it on earth. Farming is done on a massive scale. There's a cotton farm that has 40,000 acres. The Valley extends from the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta in the north to the Tehachapi Mountains in the south. For most travelers the Valley is primarily a place to pass through en route to Yosemite, Sequoia and King's Canyon national parks, or while driving between San Francisco and Los Angeles.

The sun-baked region contains a wealth of rivers, lakes and waterways. The water, in turn, nurtures vineyards, dairy farms, orchards, croplands, fields and pastures that stretch to the horizon. It has been called "the food basket of the world."

Until the mid-19th century, the Valley was a desert waiting to bloom. Millions of acres of flat, often-parched land lay in wait for workers and water. When settlers and irrigation techniques did arrive, the region was transformed into a miracle of cultivation. It truly is a land of milk and honey.

Had Moses seen that valley from atop Tehachapi Mountain (like we did), he might have called it the Promised Land.

Meindert van der Galien was so impressed with the San Joaquin Valley that he and his wife Mae are planning a return visit to California this year.

A new way to invest

Wayne De Boer

Tax Free Savings Accounts (TFSAs) are a relatively new part of the investment quagmire for many Canadians. There are two good reasons to consider a TFSA: first, a recent election pledge promised to increase contribution limits; second, your contribution can grow without attracting income tax on the earnings. Consequently, it's a powerful investing tool for anyone.

The TFSA has been called a "tax prepaid savings plan" because it was created to address the double taxation problem associated with savings in Canada: we pay tax when we earn income and then again on the income earned by that money.

Any Canadian 18 or older can open a TFSA at most financial institutions. Currently, you can contribute $5,000 to your TFSA each year, but this should increase to $10,000 per year once the Federal budget is balanced. Unused contribution amounts are not lost; they are carried forward for future use. Unlike a Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP), there is no deduction from your income for contributions, nor is there an income inclusion when you withdraw money.

TFSA withdrawals are more flexible than an RRSP, so you may want to use a TFSA to save for future home repairs, car purchases or even retirement. There is no withholding tax on a TFSA withdrawal (because no tax is owed!). Also, if you do withdraw money from a TFSA, you regain an equal amount of contribution room the following calendar year plus the next year's contribution limit.

For example, assume Karen has deposited $5,000 in her TFSA on January 1 of 2009, 2010 and 2011 and earns 5 percent. By June 30, 2011, she will have saved $16,179. Had Karen owed taxes on the $1,179 of income, her net earnings would be reduced by $544. Karen withdraws all the money to buy a car at this time. She cannot make any further contributions to her TFSA in 2011. On January 1, 2012, however, Karen could deposit $21,179 into her TFSA. This represents the $16,179 of regained contribution room plus her 2012 increase of $5,000.

For some, TFSAs may be better suited for retirement savings than RRSPs. As mentioned, withdrawals from a TFSA do not increase taxable income (as opposed to RRSPs, where all withdrawals count as taxable income). Some government retirement benefits such as Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement are reduced by different types of income. Making withdrawals from a TFSA rather than an RRSP may allow you to minimize these "claw-backs" because you do not claim any income.

Anyone can benefit from a TFSA, but before you cash out your RRSPs, meet with your financial advisor. He or she will help you evaluate how the TFSA will fit into your own saving and retirement goals, as well as determine what type of investments you should consider based on your needs and risk tolerance. There may be some tax consequences resulting from your actions. For more information on TFSAs, please see cra.gc.ca/tfsa.

Wayne De Boer is a Certified Financial Planner and a Regional Representative for Christian Stewardship Services. If you have any topics you would like to have explained in a future article, please e-mail him at wayned@csservices.ca.

Funniest words defined:
See p.3

1. A *snickersnee* is a long knife (g).
2. A *Pettifogger* tries to befuddle others with his speech (j).
3. *Bumbershoot* is another word for umbrella (b).
4. *Abibliophobia* is the fear of running out of reading material (a).
5. *Quean* refers to a disreputable woman (i).
6. *Sialoquent* means spitting during speech (f).
7. *Widdershins* is the same as counter-clockwise (h).
8. *Folderol* is nonsense (d).
9. A *jackanapes* is a rapscallion or hooligan (e).
10. A *donnybrook* can also be a melee or riot (c).

Test your languages knowledge! Questions and Answers

Did you noice the different translations of *Chritian Courier* on the top of each of the even numbered pages?

How good are you at guessing the languages?

See p. 23 for the answers.

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1961 - Vancouver, Prince George, Houston, Smithers, Surrey - 2011

with joy and thanksgiving we celebrate God's goodness for **50 Years of Marriage**:

Henk and Rena Hoornenborg

with our children and their families, June 17

Join us for a "**Come 'n Go Tea**" on Saturday, June 18 2 to 4 p.m. Elim Village, Atlin, 2nd floor Lounge, Surrey, B.C.
hhoornenborg@shaw.ca

We are thankful to God for the privilege and blessing of announcing the **50th Wedding Anniversary** of our parents and grandparents,

Dick and Mary Vermeer.

Open House on June 18, 2011 from 2-4 p.m. at Mountainview Christian Reformed Church, 290 Main St. East Grimsby. Please join us!

Home address: 27 Garden Drive, Grimsby ON L3M 3X8

Smithers, British Columbia — Lindsay, Ontario
1960 — December 14 — 2010

Psalm 86:12 *I will praise thee O Lord. I will glorify thy name for evermore.*

With joy and thanksgiving to the Lord, we congratulate on their **50th Wedding Anniversary** our parents and grandparents

Mike and Jenny Bandstra

May you be blessed with many more happy years together.
Love from: Bryant & Dawn & family, Smithers B.C.
Bruce & Robin & family, *Bridgewater S.D.*
Dave & Dale & family, *Lindsay, Ont.*
Greg & Anita & family, *Codrington, Ont.*

Home address: 2 Denfield Road, Lindsay ON K9V 0B4

With joy and thankgiving we celebrate God's faithfulness in blessing our parents,

Jake and Riemie (Hiemstra) Vander Heide

with **60 years of Marriage**.

Congratulations Mom and Dad, Pake and Beppe!

...and the God of love and peace shall be with you. 2 Corinthians 13:11

With much love from your family,

Jim & Kelly VanderHeide
Nick & Hilary VanderHeide - Elijah, Josiah
Lauren & Justin Farina - Noah
Matthew & Lynsey VanderHeide
Giliane VanderHeide & Bronson Metcalfe

Sue & Merv Reid
Michelle VanderVecht
Steven & Kristina VanderVecht - Lukas, Jackson
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Kathy VanderHeide & Don Bacon
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Jaqee Ritchie

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Claire
Mia
Lucy

June 6, 1951 Sarnia, Ontario

3263 Stonebrook Road
Bright's Grove ON N0N 1C0

Beilen, Netherlands — Halifax, N. S.
October 15, 1935 - May 6, 2011

The Lord called home his faithful servant:

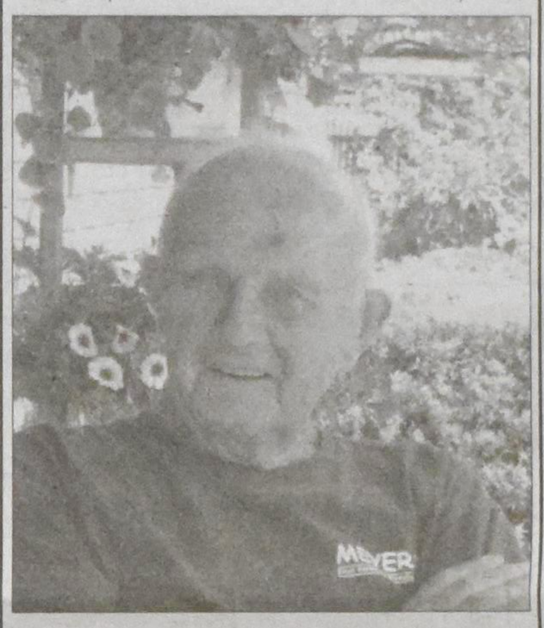
Jan "John" Winters

Dear father of: Ingrid Medeiros, Lynn (Bernie) Cormier, Arlene (Brad) Schnare, and dear grandfather of Paul, Jennifer, Jonathan, Christina and Alex.

John was a long time member and organist at All Nations Christian Reformed Church. He will be dearly missed by his church family.

One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord. Psalm 27:4

Gapinge, the Neth. — Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.
June 12, 1925 — June 2, 2011



James (Jim) Meyers

Passed away peacefully a week before his 86th birthday. He was surrounded by his family. His love for God, love for others, and his faithful service to those whose lives he touched will always be in our hearts. At home, work, Friendship, Out of the Cold, Shalom, church and in the rest of his far-reaching community he has had a lasting impact.

Jim will be deeply missed by his wife Clazina of 60 years, and

his children/grandchildren/great-grandchildren:
Elly & Bram Hoff
Shannon
Aron & Rachel – Norah, Jaden
Marcel
Ben & Zoe – Rowley
Kristin & Antoine
Julie & Jarrett
Pete & Jacqueline
Fred & Sandy Meyers
Jim & Patricia – Jarvis
Blake & Rebecca
Jordan
Helen & John Ysselstein
Shep & Colleen
John & Genevieve – Kurtis
Marc & Sylvia
Daniel
David
Sharon & Jeff Buisman
Janine & Luke
Katelyn
Sarah
Heather

He is survived by two brothers and a brother-in-law in the Netherlands.

A celebration of his life and faith took place on June 6 at Covenant CRC Church.

Donations can be made to Beacon Christian Schools, a cause that Jim supported throughout his whole life in Canada.

Address: 1444 Irvine Rd N RR 5
Niagara on the Lake ON L0S 1J0

Dia (Deah) Hoekstra (nee **Vegter**)

Dia Hoekstra of Montgomery, NY, was born on February 15, 1922, in the Netherlands. She went home to be with her Lord on Sunday, May 15, 2011, at the age of 89. She was the wife of the late William Hoekstra.

Our mother and grandmother will be remembered as a busy farmer's wife, who took care of her family with perseverance and love. We remember her enjoying watching birds, painting, cleaning, sewing, and gardening. She loved classical music and enjoyed singing hymns. Serving her Lord was important to her and she was a member of the Goshen Christian Reformed Church. We have the comfort and confidence that she now lives with her Lord and Savior.

She will be lovingly remembered by her children:
Jerry and Luc Ottens (Moorefield, ON)
Dot and Ralph Zoppa (Caledonia, MI)
Bill and Sue Hoekstra (Montgomery, NY)
John Hoekstra (Montgomery, NY)
Ron and Donna Gunderman (Wawarsing, NY)
Louie and Pearl Gunderman (Port Jervis, NY)
19 grandchildren & 2 great-grandchildren.

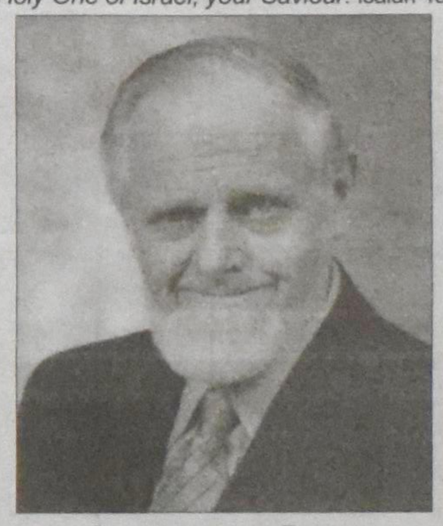
And by her siblings:
Willy and Diny Vegter (New Castle, Ontario)
Jopie Knol (Assen, Denthe, NL)
Barrus and Barb Vegter (Claresholm, Alberta)
Tony and Florence Vegter (Picture Butte, AB)
Edna Karsten (Calgary, Alberta)
Bill Vegter (Picture Butte, Alberta)
Cor Vegter (Calgary, Alberta)
Dessa and Andy Wind (Petersfield, Manitoba)
Tina and Marinus Ekkel (Iron Springs, Alberta)
Rita Van Zeggelaar (Edmonton, Alberta)

Predeceased by: Jan and Geertje Vegter (parents); Arnold Vegter (brother); Henry Zeggelaar, John Karsten (brothers-in-law).

The Memorial Thanksgiving funeral service was on May 21 at the Christian Reformed Church Goshen, NY. Donations to the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee would be appreciated. (**crwrc.org**; CRWRC 2850 Kalamazoo Ave SE, Grand Rapids MI 49560)

March 12, 1932 — May 14, 2011
Achlum, Fr, the Neth. — Abbotsford, B.C. Canada

When you pass through the waters I will be with you and when you pass through the rivers they will not sweep over you.
When you walk through the fire you will not be burned, and flames will not set you ablaze.
For I am the Lord your God the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour. Isaiah 43:2 & 3a



Gerald (Gerrit) Bosch

Entered into the presence of his Lord & Saviour on Saturday, May 14, 2011.

Beloved husband for more than 55 years Of Helen Bosch (nee de Vries)

His Children:
Corrie (Marinus†) Schryver
Jo-Ann (Peter) Dykstra
Casey Bosch
Pete Bosch
John Bosch
Stewart (Lynn) Bosch
Ann Klok †
Susan (Sid) Wyngaarden

18 grandchildren & 3 great-grandchildren.

Correspondence to: Helen Bosch
2164 Webster Court
Abbotsford BC V2T 6L7

Events

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presents
Spring Joy Concert
Directory Sharon Sandink
with
Collegium Musicum Male Choir
Director - Mendelt Hoekstra
June 18, 2011 at 7:30 pm
Mountainview CRC'
290 Main St. E., Grimsby, Ont.
Tickets at door $15
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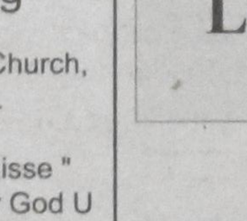
liberationchoir.com
for more information



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Job Opportunies

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in Listowel, Ontario is seeking a full time

Youth Director

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To obtain a complete job description or submit a resume please contact
Ray Heeres: rayheeres@hotmail.com, 519-291-2040,
or
Karen Stolte: stoltesfarm@gmail.com 519-291-9739

Youth Director

Are you ready to reach young people for Jesus and help them to develop a strong relationship with Him. **LINDSAY CRC**, Ont. is looking for a part-time candidate with training in Youth Ministry.
For more information contact
Rob Hoogsteen at
1-705-799-3223 or rmhoogsteen@i-zoom.net

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Please contact:
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792 Canboro Rd. Fenwick ON L0S 1C0
905-892-4332
rklassen@mutualsupport.net

Christian Courier, a dynamic and growing independent Reformed biweekly, is hiring an

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to fill a one-year maternity leave starting mid-August 2011.

We are looking for someone passionate about the need for Christian journalism in Canada, with strong writing and efficient editing skills. The position requires approximately 30 hours per week and offers a competitive salary. The Interim Editor will write editorials, plan and edit news articles, and edit columns, among other duties.

To apply, send cover letter and resume to editor@christiancourier.ca before June 30, 2011.

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Review of applications begins immediately and will continue until the deadline of December 15, 2011.

Send cover letter, résumé, statement of faith, and an explanation of your philosophy of education and vision for leadership by email to:
search@tdchristian.ca or by mail to:
Principal Search Committee,
Toronto District Christian High School
377 Woodbridge Ave, Woodbridge ON L4L 2V7

The **Christian Reformed Church in North America** (CRCNA) has a part-time (20 hrs/wk, moving to full-time) opening for a

Training Coordinator

in the department of Advancing Ministry Among Muslims (AMAM) with World Missions.
This position is to coordinate AMAM's effort to empower, educate, and equip CRC congregations and individuals to understand Islam in order to build Gospel bridges to Muslims that help them to compassionately share the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

A full job description is available at
http://www.crcna.org/pages/opportunities.cfm
To apply complete an online application, with cover letter and resume by June 23, 2011.

Director of The Network

The Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) is seeking a Director of The Network: Connecting Churches for Ministry. The Network's mission is to strengthen CRC congregations as they are empowered by Christ's love to transform lives and communities worldwide, and to do this primarily by mobilizing and strengthening regional and other networks that meet the needs and opportunities of congregations and their leaders.

Successful candidates will have a minimum of a Bachelor's degree, with a Master's degree preferred; at least 10 years of leadership experience with at least 5 years of that experience within the local church; excellent communication skills; and demonstrated skills in strategic planning, building collaboration, networking and resourcing. A personal commitment to the Reformed Christian faith and being or becoming a professing member of the CRCNA is required.

A full job description is available at http://www.crcna.org/pages/opportunities.cfm. under Career Opportunities.

To apply send cover letter and resume to networksearch@crcna.org by July 29, 2011.

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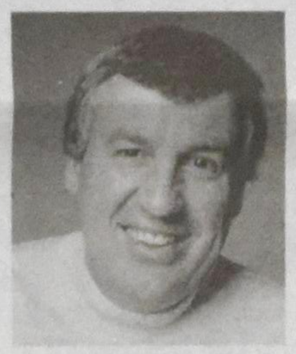

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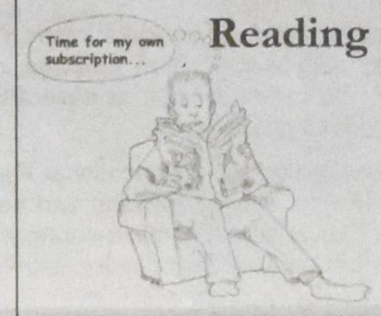

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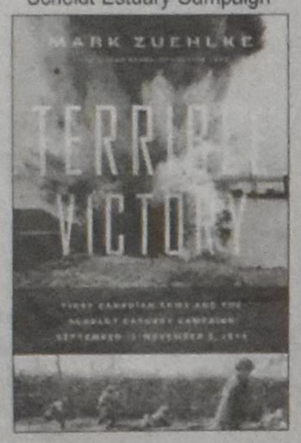
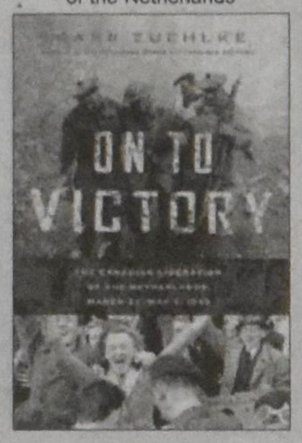


On to Victory
The Canadian Liberation of the Netherlands



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Israel trip will include spiritual development component

The **Canadian Christian Business Federation** (CCBF) is hosting a nine-day trip to Israel this fall that will include the traditional destinations as well as a daily spiritual development component.

CCBF executive director Keith Knight says that the trip is being offered "to men and women, especially those involved in business and leadership, who long to connect what they will see in Israel to their own spiritual journey."

Called *The Galilee Encounter*, it will take place from October 26 to November 3. The trip will be intentionally laid-back and relaxing to allow time for considerable spiritual reflection, as well as personal and corporate devotions. The group will be limited in size to 45 people.

"A trip to Israel," Knight says, "requires time to reflect. This is where the Bible comes alive. There is nothing as profound as having quiet morning devotions along the shores of the Sea of Galilee, and nothing as formative as standing in the desert and dealing with the 'spiritual desert' in one's own life."

See ***ad.***

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 15 Hollandse Dag 10:00 am at First Christian Reformed Church, 310 Kingscourt Ave. **Kingston**, Ont. Speaker : Rev. Nicolaas Cornelisse " Geniet van het Leven door God U gegeven". For Info call : 613-546-5615

June 18 Liberation Choir Spring concert. See p.20 for more information.

June 25 A Vision Shared: Join family, friends, colleagues, and supporters of Ren Siebenga in a celebration of his first 42 years of service to the Christian education community. Toronto District Christian High, Woodbridge, Ont. info@tdchristian.ca or 416- 410-9834. See ad.

June 26 Dutch Service will be held in the Ancaster Christian Reformed Church at 3:00 p.m. Rev. John Klomps will be preaching. DVDs are available.

July 1 Frisian picnic at starting at 11 a.m.at Pinehurst Lake Conservation Area, **Paris**, Ontario on Highway 24A (4 miles north of Paris)*Contact us at: fryskedei@hotmail.com.*

Ren Siebenga
A *Vision* Shared

Please join family, friends, colleagues, and supporters of Ren Siebenga in a celebration of his first 42 years of service to the Christian education community.

Open House:
June 25, 11:00 am-1:00 pm
Celebratory Program:
1:00 pm

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Translations for *Christian Courier*

Page	Language
2	French
4	Chinese
6	Czech
8	Turkish
10	Dutch
12	Serbian
14	Macedonian
16	Russian
18	Italian
20	Portuguese
22	Yiddish
24	Spanish

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News

Familiar organization gets a face-lift

Hendrik Vlaar

On June 1st, Worldwide Christian Schools in Canada (WWCSC) became EduDeo Ministries. After a year of intensive planning by the Canadian WWCS board, director Hank de Jong and his team launched their official re-brand, reflecting their "growing commitment to Biblical worldview integration in Christian schools in developing countries."

The re-brand will change the public focus of the WWCS image. While WWCS has traditionally focused on constructing schools, the new identity of EduDeo will better reflect the organization's emphasis on using Christ-centred education as a "transformational tool" for impoverished children around the globe.

Indeed, it is this child-focused mission that drives the staff at EduDeo. The board has expanded its mission and vision to recognize that education is "inseparable" from the gospel. The organization also recognizes the importance of developing relationships with national partners to foster reciprocity rather than one-way giving. Thus instead of operating schools itself, EduDeo partners with national mission organizations to create Christ-centred learning environments.

The harvest is great

"Children are at the heart of our ministry," says Executive Director Hank de Jong, "and the most effective way to reach children with the message of the Gospel is through building an environment to equip children with an education founded on a Biblical worldview." This requires consistent, long-term teacher training in how to integrate deep Christian understanding into every aspect of the classroom. This long-view perspective comes from witnessing the destructive effects of a dualistic worldview, whereby the fruit of Christian faith is stymied by a lack of real-world integration.

Students at Colegio Cristiano Peña de Horeb in Mojarra, Dominican Republic.

By integrating a Reformed understanding of worldview into its educational ministries, EduDeo seeks to completely transform young hearts and minds around the world.

The root of the re-brand from WWCS to EduDeo goes back to September 11, 2001. This world-changing event altered the type of fiscal regulations the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) requires Canadian charities to follow. Prior to 9/11, CRA placed less of a priority on tracking funds donated by internationally involved Canadian charities. Now, charities are required to implement more robust systems of fiscal accountability, including tracking the use of finances directed to international projects. These new regulations resulted in the Canadian branch of WWCS becoming an independent organization, and allowed the board and staff to prayerfully wrestle through a significant strategic planning process, developing a new vision and mission within this new context.

Today, Worldwide Christian Schools in Canada is an independent entity, and will be operating under its new identity of EduDeo Ministries. The hope and prayer of EduDeo Ministries is that this change will allow the organization to make a more meaningful, effective and holistic impact in the communities it serves.

Hendrik Vlaar (hendrik.vlaar@gmail.com) lives and works in Hamilton, Ont. He's a board member of Micah Challenge Canada.

Worldwide Christian Schools

AFTER MUCH DISCUSSION AND PRAYER,
WORLDWIDE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS IN CANADA HAS BECOME...

edu·deo
MINISTRIES

EDUCATION
+GOSPEL
=TRANSFORMATION

OVER THE PAST 15 YEARS,
we have experienced tremendous growth and blessing from the Lord. While our driving passion and purpose are the same, our vision and mission have expanded. Our new name and identity will help us communicate more clearly who we truly are, and the work we are called to do.

EduDeo Ministries is a Canadian, Christian, mission organization serving children in developing countries with quality education rooted in a Biblical worldview.

OUR VISION
EVERY COMMUNITY TRANSFORMED BY THE GOSPEL.

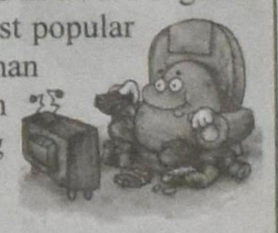
OUR MISSION
TO ADVANCE CHRIST-CENTRED EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN WORLDWIDE.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR NEW NAME AND LOGO,
visit edudeo.com or contact us with any comments or questions.
Toll-free: 866.360.4274 | Phone: 905.387.9927 | info@edudeo.com

Odds and Trends

Begone, couch potato

British potato farmers took offense at a familiar phrase a few years ago, and they're taking their complaint to the top – the Oxford English Dictionary (OED). A group of concerned farmers wants the OED to remove "couch potato" from its pages, arguing that the association between poor health and potatoes damages the vegetable's image. Potatoes are "inherently healthy," low in fat and high in vitamins, the British Potato Council points out. And even though they're right, this Council is fighting the wrong battle. The offensive phrase has more to do with the fried and salted products sold in sealed bags and less to do with an intact, humble spud. The most popular ways to prepare potatoes deserve more scrutiny than some slang. After all, "couch potato," first used in 1979, wasn't describing all those layabouts eating mashed potatoes by the TV.



Colloquial cows

Lloyd Green, a cow farmer in Somerset, England, claims that his cows "moo with a Somerset drawl," distinct from the sounds foreign cows make. Green says he knows other farmers who have noticed regional accents in their animals, just as there are between humans. John Wells, Professor of Phonetics at the University of London, thinks Green's thesis is possible, citing the precedent of "regional twangs" between birds. "You find distinct chirping accents," he says, "in the same species around the country." No word from Somerset yet on whether a thick brogue affects his animals' milk or not.

Aging bilingually

A recent Science Daily article says that older bilingual adults cope with aging better than their monolingual counterparts. Based on research from Concordia University, the article explains that bilingual brains can "compensate for age-related declines in brainpower by developing new strategies to process language." This is good news for the estimated 50 percent of the world's population that's bilingual, and might just make some baby boomers grateful that their parents didn't leave the old language behind completely.

Angela Reitsma Bick